LETTERS

FROM

SCANDINAVIA.

LETTERS

FROM

SCANDINAVIA,

ON THE

PAST AND PRESENT STATE

OF THE

NORTHERN NATIONS

OF

EUROPE.

VOL. I.

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ERRATA.

Vol. II. page 228—*for* Feb. 1791 *read* Feb. 1792.
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——— page 418, line 1,—*for* Volhinia *read* Livonia.

LETTERS

FROM

SCANDINAVIA.

LETTER I.

Peterſburg one of the greateſt Centres of human Society.—Diverſity of Dreſs, Language, and Manners.—Perfect Toleration in Matters of Religion—but Reſtraint in thoſe of Government.—The Puniſhment of the Knout.—The Knout-maſter.

St. Peterſburg.

DEAR SIR,

WERE a philoſopher to chooſe a ſtation from whence to obſerve human nature in its greateſt diverſity of character and appearance, he ought to fix upon the capital of Ruſſia. From the *Hotel de Londres* from

whence I now write, he would ſee a continual ſucceſſion of people from all quarters of the globe, dreſſed in the faſhion of their country; and with the fanciful ornaments of courtiers, and cavaliers, and heydukes, and running footmen; the venerable beards and flowing veſtments of prieſts, and the cropped heads and leather coats of peaſants; forming one of the moſt amuſing and whimſical ſcenes that can be imagined.

The diverſity is as great in the manner of life, as it is in the appearance of thoſe who inhabit this city. Foreigners generally continue attached to their native habits and predilections: and, in St. Peterſburg, you may be entertained after the manner of almoſt every nation in Europe; as well as moſt of the Aſiatic tribes, from the wall of China to the mouth of the Oby, and from Conſtantinople to the ſea of Kamtſchatka.

I am much pleaſed with the freedom which ſtrangers enjoy here—I mean the freedom from being moleſted on account of

of the ſingularity of their manner and appearance. In London you muſt not only dreſs in the Engliſh ſtyle: you muſt alſo follow all the capricious varieties of faſhion, if you would avoid being marked out as ridiculous, or hooted as a monſter. A Ruſſian cap and ſurtout would excite as much idle wonder in the mob of London, as a ſpeaking fiſh, or a learned pig. A friend of mine, who had occaſion laſt winter to viſit London after a long reſidence in this country, experienced this to his great mortification. Feeling the Engliſh dreſs rather too thin, one cold morning he ventured to put on a comfortable fur great-coat; and in this equipment to defy the eaſt wind, and the curioſity of the inhabitants of Thames-ſtreet. But he ſoon found that he had miſcalculated the effects of this laſt principle. The ſurpriſe which his firſt appearance excited, was ſoon ſucceeded by ſuſpicion, and ſuſpicion by inſult. After he had been ſufficiently mortified by the coarſe jokes and indecent ribaldry of thoſe who gathered round to gaze at him, a doubt

was ſuggeſted by ſome one whether he were really a man, or a monſter. A virago, who feared neither man nor monſter, ſtepped up to him in order to determine this point; and having examined him round and round, while he ſtood motionleſs in an agony of terror and vexation, ſhe ſpit in his face; and giving him a box on the ear, told him that "a French ſon of a bitch like him deſerved no better." This adventure effectually cured him of all deſire to appear again on the ſtreets of London in a Ruſſian great-coat.

In St. Peterſburg you are perfectly ſafe from all ſuch ridiculous diſaſters: not only do you ſee people appearing in national dreſſes of the moſt various faſhions and materials, without drawing on themſelves particular regard; but often alſo, on a maſquerade evening, you obſerve many walking to the public rooms in their maſques and other whimſical accoutrements, without attracting a troubleſome degree of attention.

Some of our countrymen, who are ſo zealouſly Engliſh as to revere even the follies and exceſſes which ſpring out of our

free

free conſtitution, affect to conſider this circumſtance as an inſtance of the ſtupidity of the Ruſſian character, and of the degradation to which the people are reduced by the active operation of a deſpotic government. It does not appear to me, however, that any ſuch ſuppoſition is neceſſary to account for the fact. The Ruſſian empire is made up of a variety of nations, differing from one another in language, in dreſs, and in manners. The Court dreſs being purely foreign, there are no circumſtances which give to any one national dreſs of the empire the ſuperiority over all the reſt. Hence every tribe preſerves its own: and as the capital naturally attracts to itſelf ſome individuals from every nation of which the empire is compoſed, the inhabitants of St. Peterſburg are accuſtomed to ſee much greater variety of dreſſes than thoſe of almoſt any other city. Habit produces the ſame effects in Ruſſia that it does in other countries: a Ruſſian can nomore than an Engliſhman be ſuppoſed to ſtand gaping in idle wonder

at objects which he may see every hour of the day.

I happened to be, about the middle of the late war in America, at a town in the south of England, at the time it was announced that a Highland regiment was on its march to be stationed there for the winter. A petticoated regiment had not been seen there in the memory of man, and the prospect of so strange a sight raised the most lively curiosity: all ranks were equally eager in their enquiries about this wonderful battalion, and anxious for the day of its arrival. To have seen the interest that was excited, you would have imagined that an army from the moon, if not from a still more distant planet, was on its march to bless the inhabitants of this fortunate city with sights hitherto unseen by mortal eye. The wished-for day at length arrived; and men, women, and children, myself among the number, turned out to see a regiment of men in short hose and shorter petticoats, with tartan plaids around their shoulders, and

and hairy purſes dangling before them. For the ſpace of a week curioſity continued unſated. The parade was crowded with ſpectators. Whenever a highlander appeared, all eyes were turned on him. In all companies you heard of nothing but the Highland regiment. The gentlemen admired the eaſy garments and unincumbered motions of the ſoldiers; and the ladies dreamed of nothing but the ſingularity of their dreſs.

But wonders, like other things, come to an end. The novelty ſoon wore off, and, by the end of the ſecond week, a highlander had nothing more marvellous in his appearance than another man. The caſe is the ſame in Ruſſia. New ſights excite a curioſity as great, though not ſo troubleſome, in a Ruſſian as in an Engliſhman. But it is not a proof of ſtupidity in the Ruſſians, that they are not ſtruck with appearances, which, though they be uncommon with us, are familiar among them.

Strangers enjoy in this empire, as entire a freedom in matters of religion as in dreſs and manner of life; neither do the natives

difcover a greater degree of curiofity to obferve the one than the other. The Englifh, the French, the Germans, the Dutch, &c. have churches in St. Peterfburg, which are attended by the ladies and domeftics of their refpective congregations. Sometimes alfo you may fee a few gentlemen in thefe churches; but this is comparatively a rare occurrence. It is alfo extremely rare to fee natives led by their curiofity to obferve the ceremonies of any religion except their own. Indeed, the forms of the Ruffian national church are fo fplendid and impofing, that thofe who have been educated to revere them, muft neceffarily look with contempt on the nakednefs of other religious inftitutes which have no fuch pompous appendages to fet them off.

The freedom which foreigners enjoy in thefe refpects is, however, counterbalanced by fome reftraints and mortifications to which they are expofed. An Englifhman, for example, thinks it extremely hard that he is not at liberty to fpeak his fentiments of political meafures, or political men and wo-

men; nor to travel more than a few poſts out of town without a paſſport; nor to paſs a man of rank without making way for him. In theſe reſpects, however, he is only on a footing with the natives. Political diſcuſſion is almoſt wholly interdicted: and thoſe who ſtill venture to ſpeak of the meaſures of government, do it in whiſpers; and not till they have looked carefully around them, to ſee whether any ſuſpicious perſon be within hearing. Yet, notwithſtanding the care that is taken to prevent the too free agitation of matters of ſtate, men will ſometimes take liberties with forbidden ſubjects of diſcourſe even in Ruſſia. In theſe caſes a ſpecial ſtatute is iſſued, prohibiting all converſation whatever on that particular point, and denouncing high pains and penalties againſt all who ſhall be found tranſgreſſing *.

What

* The only ordinance of this kind that has been publiſhed ſince I have been in Ruſſia, was iſſued on the occaſion of the death of Field Marſhal Prince Potemkin. This man, who had the good fortune to pleaſe his ſovereign,

What effect ſuch a prohibition would have had in England, an Engliſhman need not be told. But in Ruſſia there are ſome cogent

ſovereign, and had in conſequence been raiſed to the higheſt rank and authority to which a ſubject could aſpire, was extremely obnoxious to the nation. He died ſuddenly, and with circumſtances which excited ſuſpicion; although, from the common account, his death ſeems to have proceeded from an apoplectic ſtroke, to which, from his manner of life, he muſt have been peculiarly prediſpoſed. The reſentment of the nation, which had been repreſſed by the dread of his power, immediately broke out into the moſt bitter invectives againſt his memory. He was accuſed of ſacrificing, with equal facility, the honour of his ſovereign and the intereſts of the empire to the views of his own aggrandiſement; of cruſhing friends and enemies without diſtinction and without remorſe, when they ſtood in the way of his own preferment; and of privately ſending immenſe ſums of the public money out of the empire, for purpoſes which he durſt not avow. His private vices, too, a rich field for cenſure, were induſtriouſly brought to light. It was now univerſally known

cogent motives to obedience which ſeldom fail of producing their effect. A great teacher of political ſubmiſſion, called a knout-maſter general, keeps his reſidence in this capital;

known that he had been accuſtomed to carry the indulgences of the table to a groſs exceſs; and that two of his nieces had ſucceſſively lived with him as his miſtreſſes. Even his courage was called in queſtion: and as it was known that, in his practice, he was a mortal enemy to duelling; this circumſtance, which had formerly been aſcribed to his moderation, was now accounted a proof of his puſillanimity. Poſterity, if it ſhall think the life of Prince Potemkin worth the recording, may, perhaps, find in him both good and great qualities: but as his contemporaries were not inclined, after his death, to allow him either the one or the other; his ſovereign, who reſpected the memory of a ſervant ſhe had believed faithful, choſe to conſign his name to a premature oblivion, and to impoſe ſilence when ſhe could not command approbation.

As Prince Potemkin appears again in theſe Letters as an important actor on the theatre of Ruſſia, it will readily occur to the reader, that this note was written ſome time after the letter to which it is annexed.

who,

who, though but little converſant with the ſci-ence of juriſprudence, can, by a *few practical ſtrokes*, make a ſtatute more coercive than could be done by all the reaſoning of all the lawyers that ever lived. This auguſt per-ſonage, who is generally a man of high rank and higher worſhip, never condeſcends to adopt the pedantic accuracy of attending to forms of procedure, to attend to diſtinc-tions of caſes, or to the tedious inveſtigation of facts and circumſtances, which tend ſo much to retard the legal ſpeed of juſtice in our na-tive country. Without any other formality than that of announcing an order from his ſuperiors, he proceeds directly to the exer-ciſe of his occupation, and generally applies his admonition ſo vigorouſly, that he who has received one leſſon ſeldom cares to be found ſtanding in need of a ſecond.

You may perhaps think that any thing like levity is very much miſplaced on ſuch a ſubject. Engliſhmen are accuſtomed to ſpeak of the knout as of the moſt dreadful and moſt degrading puniſhment that can be conceived. Yet it is neither more cruel nor

more

more degrading than ſome puniſhments that are inflicted in our own country. Conſider the public whippings which are, in a multitude of caſes, awarded by our own law; or the ſtill more dreadful floggings, &c. which our military delinquents are obliged to undergo; and you will ſee that one of the freeſt and moſt enlightened nations that ever exiſted, has not yet been able to deviſe any probable expedient to mitigate, beyond a certain degree, the ſeverity of legal infliction. I would not be underſtood to inſinuate any unqualified approbation of either the one practice or the other. I only wiſh to aſſure you, that the dreadful deſcriptions we have read of the puniſhment of the knout are conſiderably overcharged; at leaſt, that they are not applicable to the preſent practice; although they may have been ſuggeſted by ſome of the moſt atrocious inſtances of former times.

Travellers have either been miſled by their own feelings on this ſubject, or they have voluntarily miſled their readers. Were I to tranſlate the word *knout* by its preciſe equi-

equivalent *whip*, and tell you that, in Ruſſia, perſons convicted of certain crimes are puniſhed by whipping, I ſhould tell you the exact truth: and yet it would not ſtrike you as in the leaſt degree extraordinary; becauſe you may ſee the ſame ſpecies of diſcipline inflicted on the ſame deſcription of offenders in every town in Great Britain. But when I retain the Ruſſian word, and ſay, that in this unhappy country malefactors are knouted; imagination ſupplies the place of exact deſcription, and your blood begins to freeze, from a confuſed notion you form, of flaying alive, and tearing out the tongue, and otherwiſe mangling the carcaſe of ſuch miſerable wretches as are condemned to this inhuman puniſhment. Truſt me, there is more deception in this than you may be apt to imagine. The knout, as it is commonly inflicted, is not more ſevere than the whippings in many caſes ordered by an Engliſh judge. It is not by any means ſo terrible as the floggings ſometimes inflicted on our military offenders. A Ruſſian, after having juſt received the ordina-

ry number of ſtrokes of the knout, which ſeldom exceeds twelve or fifteen, has been heard to ſay, that for a bottle of brandy he would undergo as many more. You may indeed inſinuate, that this muſt have been owing to his attachment to brandy, rather than to the mildneſs of the puniſhment. But I imagine the greateſt drunkard in the Engliſh army, when ſuffering the excruciating effect of five hundred laſhes, would not conſent to take another five hundred for all the diſtilled ſpirits in Britain. But, although in point of "corporal ſufferance" a flogging in Ruſſia be not more ſevere than one in England, I acknowledge that I cannot think of the office of knout-maſter general without abhorrence; becauſe, from the manner in which the ſuſpicious policy of favourites and miniſters cauſes it to be exerciſed, it is a vile inſtrument of oppreſſion, employed to execute the atrocious purpoſes of private revenge, as often as to puniſh the guilt of real delinquents. Not only may maſters order their ſlaves to be knouted by the public executioner, without aſſigning

any

any reaſon but their own pleaſure; but a mandate is ſometimes iſſued, under the authority of government, ordering the *knout-meiſter general* to inflict the ſame puniſhment on perſons of rank and faſhion who have had the misfortune to fall under ſuſpicion; that is, who have given offence to ſome of thoſe poiſonous inſects, which, under the names of courtiers and favourites, are continually buzzing about the ears of majeſty. In theſe caſes the knout-meiſter, attended by ſome of his gang, goes privately to the houſe of the devoted perſon, and, whatever be the rank or ſex or age of his victim, executes his orders with unpitying rigour.

I have been told (for I never had an opportunity of ſeeing it) that when this officer is ordered to Moſcow, which ſometimes happens, as moſt of the diſaffected or diſappointed nobles have their winter reſidence there, his appearance operates like the breaking out of the plague. The public places are ſhut up; ſocial intercourſe is almoſt wholly ſuſpended, and the city waiting in fearful expectation where the blow is to fall; for

for it is well known that the knout-meiſter never makes ſuch journeys in vain. Cenſure is totally inadequate to ſuch a villanous police. Read the account of it, and, with me, thank Heaven that you were born an Engliſhman!

I am, &c.

LETTER II.

Atrocities common in all Periods of the Ruſſian Government.—Voluntary Submiſſion of the Ruſſians to Deſpotiſm.--Inſtances of the Ferocity of Peter.--Action and Re-action between Tyranny in a Government and Degradation in a People.—Difficulty of political Reform, and Danger of political Innovation.—Ignorance and Obſtinacy of the Ruſſians—overcome in a great Meaſure by the perſevering Energy and Wiſdom of Government.—Magnanimity and other Virtues as well as Talents of Catherine II.

St. Peterſburg.

DEAR SIR,

YOU expreſs your aſtoniſhment how any nation can ſubmit to a government which authoriſes ſuch enormities as the private caſtigations mentioned in my letter. Had you attended to the internal hiſtory of this empire, your ſurpriſe would have ceaſed.

The

The annals of the princes of this country, with only a few exceptions, are ftained with deeds of uncommon atrocity. The gibbet, the axe, and the knout, were the great inftruments of their adminiftration; and hence the people, feeing the rod of tyranny continually waving over their heads, became by degrees callous to its impreffion. From the practice of fubmitting to the will of their princes arofe habits of fubjection in the people, which have rendered them the willing victims of arbitrary power, and riveted the fetters of defpotifm.

At what period, or from what circumftances, this tendency was firft impreffed on the national fpirit is perhaps impoffible to be known. The caufes which give to nations their diftinctive character, feem to me to lie generally without the reach of our obfervation. I imagine that government, which is generally fuppofed to be the great agent in this cafe, is as much the confequence as it is the caufe of national character. At one period, the form of government over the greater part of Europe was

nearly the ſame. The characters of the different European nations were, however, at that period, as diſtinct as they are now. The three nations of which the Britiſh empire conſiſts have long enjoyed ſimilar privileges; yet the Engliſh character is very different from the Iriſh, and the Scotch is diſtinct from both.

It would ſeem, therefore, that the origin of thoſe characteriſtic peculiarities which diſtinguiſh nations is very remote, and that it is vain to ſearch for its cauſes. But, when the tendency of national manners and opinions is once formed, it is eaſy for government to aſſiſt its progreſs, to complete its effect, and prolong its duration. According to this view, the forms of government, which have been ſanctified in Ruſſia by immemorial preſcription, appear fully adequate to account for the abject ſubmiſſion which diſtinguiſhes the ſubjects of this empire. Without recurring to the barbarity of more antient times, I ſhall beg leave to turn your attention to Peter the Great, juſtly in many reſpects ſtyled the father of

his

his country. I need not remind you of the atrocious puniſhments inflicted in his name, and by his authority. You cannot be ignorant of them, and I wiſh not to revive in you the ſentiments of horror and indignation which you muſt have felt in peruſing the accounts of them. Peter, indeed, ſeldom had recourſe to the private mode of puniſhment which I mentioned in my laſt, but he often puniſhed with his own hands ſuch delinquents as he did not wiſh to deliver up to the public executioner. The inſtances of this kind that are on record are almoſt innumerable. I ſelect a ſingle example. He had ſummoned a meeting of his council, I have forgot on what occaſion, at ſeven in the morning. When he entered the ſenate-houſe, he was aſtoniſhed to find not one of thoſe arrived whom he had ordered to attend. By the time he had waited about ten minutes, and wrought himſelf up to a proper degree of rage, the preſident appears; who, ſeeing the ſtorm that was about to fall on him, begins to make an apology. But in vain. Peter, whoſe paſſions

never liſtened to excuſes, inſtantly ſeizes and belabours him moſt ſeverely. Every member ſhared the ſame fate according to the order of his arrival, until General Gordon appeared. The general was not a little alarmed at the appearance which the council-room preſented. But the Emperor's rage was by this time pretty well exhauſted, and he only told Gordon, that, as he had not been punctual to his time, he was very lucky in being *ſo far* behind it. "For," added he, "I am already ſufficiently "fatigued with beating theſe ſcoundrels; "and I underſtand that a Scotch conſtitution "does not agree well with a drubbing."

The private infliction of the knout ſeems to be the legitimate offspring of this ready diſcipline. The Ruſſian ſceptre has, you know, been held, ſince the days of Peter the Great, only by women, except during the ſhort reign of Peter the Second, and the few months which Peter the Third ſurvived his aunt. Although ſome of the Princeſſes who have ſucceeded to the throne of Peter the Great have ſhewn themſelves qualified

to

to ſway his ſceptre, none of them have been able to wield his cudgel. Hence this duty has devolved on the knout-meiſter general.

How far the nation has loſt or gained by the change, I ſhall not pretend to gueſs. But it ſeems to be owing to the reſpectable origin of this mode of caſtigation that there is leſs of diſgrace connected with it than could eaſily be imagined. It is well known that chaſtiſements which Peter the Great inflicted with his own hand were never ſuppoſed to diſgrace thoſe who ſuffered them. When a courtier was ſoundly drubbed, or pulled by the noſe, or had a tooth torn out by the Emperor, at all which exerciſes Peter was remarkably dextrous, he ſuffered only the bodily pain of the operation. His honour was not in the leaſt affected. And as it ſeldom happened that his maſter put leſs confidence in him after ſuch an accident than he had done before it, his credit ſuffered as little as his honour. Menzikoff uſed to appear in all his native haughtineſs and preſumption, even when his counte-

nance bore the moſt unequivocal marks of his maſter's reſentment. In like manner the private infliction of the knout is hardly ſuppoſed to diſgrace a Ruſſian gentleman more than flagellation does an Engliſh ſchoolboy.

On theſe accounts this ſpecies of diſcipline is leſs atrocious, and excites leſs abhorrence, than you ſeem to imagine. When an inſtance of it occurs, thoſe who hear of it thank their good fortune that they were not the victims, and continue to treat the ſufferer with the ſame conſideration as before. I muſt alſo add, that the inſtances of it which now occur are VERY RARE.

Yet with all the alleviations I can ſuggeſt (and I am willing to ſuggeſt all that truth will allow), you will ſay, that the government muſt be abominable which authorizes ſuch enormities. I ſhall not diſpute this point with you; for I think little can be urged in favour of that ſyſtem of legiſlation which is held together only by the fear of corporal infliction, which muſt degrade before

before it can govern, and make of the human ſpecies bad men, in order to render them good ſubjects.

But, although I cannot ſurvey without abhorrence the ſyſtem of deſpotiſm that prevails in this empire, I think there are inſuperable difficulties in the way of ſpeedily introducing any conſiderable improvement. The corruption of the people ſeems to keep pace in every nation with the vices of the government. Perhaps tyranny in the government and degradation in the people act mutually in producing one another; juſt as, in certain diſeaſes, the derangement of the body induces mental debility, and the debility thus induced increaſes the bodily diſorder from which it aroſe. Whatever there may be in this ſuppoſition, the ſpirit of the Ruſſian government and the manners of the Ruſſians are well adapted to one another. A free government would hardly be reliſhed by the nation in its preſent ſtate, and a more enlightened nation would not tamely ſubmit to ſuch a government.

I have

I have often, indeed, heard bold theorifts propofe to annihilate at once whatever is vicious in the government of this empire, and to create a free conftitution in its ftead. A furgeon might as well cut off a limb in order to remove the pain of a corn on the toe. The cure might, to be fure, be in both cafes accomplifhed ; but I acknowledge, I fhould not choofe to truft either my perfon to fuch radical practice, or my political quiet to fuch active theory. Such men feem to confider the fcience of legiflation as analogous to a mechanical art, in which, from previoufly calculating the power of every conftituent part, you can deduce with mathematical certainty the general effect of the whole. But legiflators have not like mechanics inert matter to act upon, which they can mould into whatever fhape they pleafe. They have for the object of their fcience, beings refractory to the hand of the manager—unreafonable in their prejudices, in their predilections and antipathies, and who retain the original impreffion and bent of their character with an obftinacy

obſtinacy proportioned to the force that is applied to change them. It is impoſſible to calculate the effect that may be produced by an attempt to introduce a great and ſudden change into the ſituation of a nation of ſuch beings; becauſe it is impoſſible to foreſee the various accidents that may and muſt occur to accelerate or retard or change the motion you have communicated to the national ſpirit.

In attempting to change the inſtitutions and manners and ſpirit of a nation—at leaſt of ſuch a nation as Ruſſia—the only way you can proceed with ſafety, or with a certainty of accompliſhing your end, is to proceed with extreme caution; to advance toward your object ſlowly; and to undermine gradually the prejudices and habits which length of time has conſecrated in the minds of the people. The nation muſt be made to wiſh for a reformation before they will accept of one. Every one knows the reluctance with which the plans of Peter the Great for the civilization and improvement of the people were received by the nation.

nation. Had Peter's genius been leſs ſublime and impoſing, or had his people been more cloſely united by a free communication, and a knowledge of the national temper, this great legiſlator might have been known to the hiſtorian only as filling up a blank in the barren annals of deſpotiſm, or at beſt as a prince who periſhed in the raſh though generous attempt to overcome nature, and impreſs the poliſh of civilization on the barbarous manners of a ſavage people. The attempt which the Empreſs Elizabeth made to introduce a more regular adminiſtration of juſtice, and a better ſyſtem of juriſprudence, was not more favourably received. Clamorous complaints were ſet up in all quarters by thoſe intereſted in the continuation of old abuſes; and eagerly re-echoed by thoſe who were the dupes of a blind attachment to ancient uſages, and who had neither common ſenſe to ſee the tendency of the propoſed laws, nor ſpirit to feel the oppreſſive nature of thoſe that were to be abrogated. "If they will not conſent to receive good laws," ſaid Elizabeth,

beth, "they muſt be allowed to feel the weight of their bad ones;" and the attempt was laid aſide.

When I have ſtated ſuch facts as theſe in converſation, and ſtill heard the trumpet of reformation ſounded by the advocates for great and immediate alteration; it has always brought to my mind the fanciful experiment which divines have imagined—of ſuppoſing a bad man to have gained admiſſion into heaven, and there depicting the uncouth appearance he would make amongſt beings for whoſe ſociety he is not prepared. I imagine that Ruſſia would make juſt ſuch an awkward figure among nations, were its preſent government made as perfect as a republican could wiſh it. What has ſometimes happened with regard to individuals, might, in this caſe, be found verified of the nation. I have known a Ruſſian ſoldier, who has ſolicited a diſcharge with much anxiety and perſeverance, return to his old commander a few months after he had obtained his long wiſhed-for liberty, and beg to be

again taken into the ſervice; becauſe he did not know how to live as his own maſter. I think the nation would be as incapable of ſhaking off at once its old prejudices, as this ſoldier was; and as unfit for reliſhing the bleſſings of freedom. Too many are intereſted, or fancy themſelves intereſted, in the continuation of the exiſting abuſes, to allow them to be remedied without oppoſition. The reclamation of ſuch men, coinciding with vulgar notions, would unavoidably excite general diſcontent. The nation is not ſufficiently enlightened to judge of the motives from which alterations in the form of government are introduced, or of thoſe from which they would be oppoſed.

In ſuch a diſpute, the party whoſe arguments were addreſſed to the national prejudices would be ſure to have the advantage over his antagoniſt.

But though it be very unlikely that Ruſſia is to obtain a diſtinguiſhed rank among nations, either for the mildneſs of its government or the civilization of its inhabitants;

habitants; the nation is certainly in a progressive ſtate of improvement, in both reſpects. For the honour of royalty I muſt add, that the progreſs is entirely owing to the exertions of the ſovereign power. If we were to compare in this reſpect the ſovereigns of Ruſſia, from the acceſſion of Peter the Firſt to the preſent time, with the princes of any other country in Europe for an equal length of time, and at a period when the nation was equally unenlightened with the Ruſſians; Peter and his ſucceſſors would, I am perſuaded, gain much by the compariſon. Even in England, national improvements have ſeldom had their origin in the ſovereign power. The ſpirit of the people has generally led the way; and the court has only had the merit of following. In many caſes it has been reluctantly dragged along, and forced to ſanction improvements which it could no longer retard.

But in Ruſſia this progreſs has been completely reverſed. At the acceſſion of Peter the Firſt to the throne, the nation was ſunk into

into the groſſeſt ignorance and barbarity, Peter and his ſucceſſors have had not only to ſet the example of civilization, but alſo to compel their ſubjects to follow it. The nation, fancying itſelf, according to the abſurd pride of barbariſm, the firſt people on earth in regard to every uſeful accompliſhment, has not admitted, without the utmoſt reluctance, the improvements that have been enforced by the ſovereign power. The foreigners who have been employed to inſtruct the people, have met with every diſcouragement from the nation, that ignorance and pride and prejudice could throw in their way. And the natives have generally ſucceeded in making the ſituation of theſe men ſufficiently irkſome. Of the Engliſh officers who have entered into this ſervice, I have not found an individual who has not had cauſe to regret that ever he had flattered himſelf with the dreams of greatneſs in Ruſſia. Admiral Sir Samuel Greig ſhould have been an exception. His integrity was above ſuſpicion. His abilities in his profeſſion were not diſputed; and he poſſeſſed the friendſhip

friendſhip of many of the principal men of the empire. Yet was his ſituation rendered extremely diſagreeable, from the national jealouſy of foreigners, and the fretful oppoſition of men who would not be inſtructed, becauſe they were not convinced that they needed to learn. "I am ſorry you have ſo "many enemies," ſaid the Empreſs to him on one occaſion, "but I know the reaſon "of it; and you may depend on my pro- "tection."

The coloniſts, whom the preſent empreſs invited to cultivate the waſte lands belonging to the crown, and inſtruct the natives in the different operations of huſbandry, met with a ſtill worſe reception. The imperial orders in their favour were, it is true, fulfilled according to the letter of the ſtatute. Each family received horſes and cows, and inſtruments of huſbandry, and proviſions, according to the terms of the agreement. But the horſes and cows were either old and uſeleſs, or elſe ſo wild and untractable, that a great part of them made their eſcape into the woods. The utenſils were the worſt and the cheapeſt

that could be procured; and the provifions were for the moft part fo much damaged as to be unfit for ufe. The unhappy colonifts were reduced, by thefe iniquitous and inhuman arts, to extreme mifery. Many of them died of hunger; and not a few, finding their fituation infupportable and hopelefs, put an end to their own lives. In the meantime the principal authors of thefe abufes, Mr. Betfkoi and Mr. Rutfky, were continually boafting of their fervices, and prefenting accounts of excellent horfes, and cows, and carts, and provifions which they were furnifhing; and complimenting their fovereign on the happy confequences which muft follow from her benevolent plans for the improvement of the country, and receiving great fums from the treafury for the behoof of the colonifts, befides croffes and ribbands and gratuities for their own fervices. The infignificance of thefe men might have claffed them with the multitude of knaves whofe names are forgotten when their vices have ceafed to be troublefome, did not the nature of their crimes drag them from the oblivion

to

to which they ſeemed deſtined, and hold them up to more than common deteſtation.

Almoſt every plan that has been adopted for the improvement of the country has met with a ſimilar oppoſition. The artiſts who were a few years ago invited over from Britain to put the iron works on a better footing, found themſelves haraſſed with ſo many impoſitions, and ſubjected to ſo many mortifications, that almoſt all of them have already reſigned their places. At Petrazavedſky, where they were chiefly ſtationed, only two have remained. In all probability, their forbearance will ſoon alſo be exhauſted.

It has ſeldom happened that the ſovereigns of Ruſſia have found ſervants ſufficiently enlightened to ſee the utility of their plans of improvement, and at the ſame time ſufficiently honeſt to co-operate, with good faith, in carrying them into effect. The men who have been employed for this purpoſe have either failed in their duty from national prejudice, becauſe they did not wiſh the objects entruſted to their care to ſucceed, or they have employed the confidence repoſed

in them, diſhoneſtly, to ſatisfy their own avarice. Catharine the Second has found many a Betſkoi and Rutſky to make her plans of improvement fail of the effect they ſhould have produced.

Yet, with all theſe obſtructions, Ruſſia has certainly made very conſiderable progreſs in improvement ſince the æra of Peter the Great. Manufactures of almoſt every kind have been brought to much greater perfection, and are carried on upon a much more extenſive ſcale. Moſt of the uſeful as well as many ornamental arts have made great advances. Commerce has been greatly extended. Even learning has made ſome progreſs. It is now no uncommon thing to meet with ſlaves who can both read and write; whereas, in the days of Peter the Great, ſo uncommon were theſe accompliſhments, that even Prince Menzikoff, Peter's great favourite, and who afterwards ruled the empire under the nominal reign of Catharine the Firſt, was all his life-time unacquainted with both. The preſſes of Peterſburgh and Moſcow have furniſhed the nation with a conſiderable

variety of books in the Ruſſian language. Moſt of them are indeed only tranſlations from other authors, chiefly Engliſh and French, but Ruſſia alſo furniſhes ſome original writers.

Theſe circumſtances, while they ardently mark the progreſſive improvement of the nation, lead us to conclude that the prejudices which have ſo long counteracted the attempts of the ſovereigns of Ruſſia to raiſe their ſubjects out of their ancient ſtate of barbariſm and degradation, will gradually diſappear. The Ruſſians will acquire juſter notions of the national intereſt; they will become ſenſible of their own deficiencies; they will deſerve a better ſyſtem of government by feeling that they ſtand in need of it.

I am confirmed in theſe anticipations, when I conſider that the Ruſſian government has become much milder in its execution than it was in former times. The adminiſtration of Elizabeth was conſiderably more lenient than that of Peter the Great; of Menzikoff, under Catharine the Firſt; or

of Biron, under the Empreſs Anne. Elizabeth was not naturally cruel. She even affected the praiſe of clemency. Yet at the acceſſion of Peter the Third to the throne, ſeventeen thouſand perſons are ſaid to have been reſtored, from baniſhment or impriſonment, to their liberty. Many of theſe had been guilty of no other crime than that of being the relations or dependants of thoſe perſons of diſtinction who had been ſacrificed to court intrigues. For, even in the reign of Elizabeth, it continued to be too much the practice, to involve in the ruin of any great man who had become obnoxious to the court, every perſon who was ſuppoſed to be particularly attached to his fortunes.

During the reign of the preſent empreſs this abſurd ſpecies of tyranny has never been admitted. In general the adminiſtration of Catharine the Second has been milder than that of her immediate predeceſſor. It has exhibited very few ſtriking inſtances of ſeverity. Thoſe miſerable beings with whom the mines of Siberia are ſtill amply ſupplied, conſiſt almoſt entirely of the refuſe of the

people,

people, who have been condemned by the ordinary courſe of law, and whoſe fate court intrigues could not have influenced. That ſpecies of offenders whom the jealouſy of former ſovereigns would have puniſhed with the utmoſt rigour, I mean thoſe who were ſuſpected to be diſaffected to the intereſt of the ruling party at court, have not generally met with a ſeverer puniſhment than that of being *permitted* to travel into foreign countries, during a certain term of years, for their improvement. Elizabeth, to gratify the ſpleen of her favourites for the time, baniſhed to Siberia, Leſtoc, whoſe talents and activity had been the principal means of raiſing her to the throne, and that after ſhe had given him the ſtrongeſt aſſurances, confirmed by a ſolemn oath, that ſhe would never liſten to the inſinuation of his enemies againſt him. Catharine the Second, after her elevation to the throne, allowed the Counteſs Elizabeth Vorontzoff to live unmoleſted, although this woman had been the favourite miſtreſs of Peter the Third, on whoſe account he had formed thoſe reſolutions againſt

his wife which brought on the revolution in 1762.

With equal magnanimity, and in equal oppofition to the maxims of Ruffian revolutions, fhe continued Count Munich in all his offices and appointments, although he had been the moft zealous of Peter's adherents, and had been prevented only by his mafter's pufillanimity from precipitating her from the throne to which fhe was raifed.

The fame fpirit of moderation has diftinguifhed the courfe of her reign. Under former fovereigns, the difmiffal of a favourite or minifter from his office was generally the prelude to fending him to Siberia. The prefent Emprefs has feldom changed her fervants; and thofe of them who have been difmiffed, have been allowed to retire honourably, and live in peace. Although her plan of forming a new code of laws has not been carried into effect, fhe has eftablifhed many particular ftatutes, and adopted many regulations favourable to an equal diftribution of juftice. In the emancipation of the peafants on the crown lands, fhe has fet an

example

example which, it is to be hoped, many of the Ruſſian gentlemen will ſoon follow. A few of them have already been in part her imitators in this reſpect; and as the good effects of this liberal policy become apparent, it is not to be doubted but that it will be more generally adopted.

During the preſent reign the public has been totally unaccuſtomed to ſuch ſhocking examples of barbarity as were often preſented to them in former times. The natural conſequence of this circumſtance, taken in connection with the increaſed diffuſion of knowledge, has been, that the national ſpirit has acquired a certain degree of independence which it did not before poſſeſs. Abſolute ſubmiſſion to the will of their ſuperiors, though ſtill a very prevalent principle, is not now the ruling principle which actuates the ſubjects of this empire. Were Peter the Great to riſe from the tomb, and ſeize his former ſceptre, his courtiers and officers would not ſubmit to be publicly beaten by him without reſiſtance; nor durſt he attempt to exerciſe on the moſt deſpicable ſet of men

in the empire thoſe atrocities with which he formerly extinguiſhed the Strelgi.

Although therefore much remains to be done, in order that the government of this country may be eſtabliſhed on liberal and equal principles, yet conſiderable approaches have been made to this object. The adminiſtration of Catharine is as different from that of ſome of her predeceſſors, as it is from that of our own government under George the Third.

I am ſenſible that, in attempting to beſtow praiſe on the Empreſs of Ruſſia, I have to encounter opinions which have long been eſtabliſhed in your mind. Like moſt of our countrymen, you have formed your idea of her character from a few detached facts; which, as generally happens to ſuch reports, have been embelliſhed in proportion to the diſtance from which they have come, with many imaginary circumſtances faſhioned to the theories of thoſe who have imported and rehearſed them. I am ſure however you will do me the juſtice to believe that I would not willingly miſlead you, eſpecially on a

ſubject where I can have no intereſt in miſrepreſentation. I had when I came into this country ſimilar impreſſions of this auguſt perſonage with you; and, when I firſt heard her virtues extolled, an emotion of diſguſt involuntarily mixed itſelf with my incredulity. But a longer reſidence has convinced me, that it is not without reaſon the natives conſider the revolution to be one of the moſt fortunate events that ever happened to the empire. Without entering into the diſcuſſion of the particular facts, on which the prejudice againſt the Empreſs of Ruſſia is founded, I only beg leave to ſubmit it to yourſelf, whether the ſovereign can be ſuppoſed to poſſeſs ſmall merit, who, coming by a very equivocal title to the throne of a nation accuſtomed to faction and revolution, has been able during a long reign of upwards of thirty years to unite in her favour the general voice of the people.

LETTER III.

Slowneſs of progreſſive Improvement.—The Circumſtances that promoted various Improvements in England—contraſted with many untoward Circumſtances in the Condition of the Ruſſians.—The Empreſs Anne, and Adminiſtration of Count Biron.—The Empreſs Elizabeth.—The Fall of Peter III.—Extremes of Knowledge and Ignorance in Ruſſia, and of Rudeneſs and Barbariſm.—Errors of former Sovereigns of Ruſſia, in their Mode of endeavouring to diffuſe Knowledge throughout the Empire.

St. Peterſburg.

DEAR SIR,

IN my laſt I gave it as my opinion, that Ruſſia is in a progreſs of improvement in regard to both the adminiſtration of its government and the character of the people. If, however, you take what you are accuſtomed

tomed to ſee in Britain as the ſtandard with which you compare the ſtate of this country; and imagine that, in Ruſſia, arts and ſciences and civilization have made a remarkable progreſs, you will miſtake very widely: Ruſſia will in no reſpect bear a compariſon with England. Indeed it is impoſſible it ſhould: the progreſs of national improvement is neceſſarily ſlow. Within the ordinary limits of human life we can ſeldom mark more than a few advances on ſome particular ſubjects; and we muſt take periods conſiderably more diſtant, if we would find the general and remarkable difference between the points at which we make the compariſon.

This remark is well illuſtrated by the hiſtory of our own country. England was one of the firſt nations on which the light of civilization dawned, when it began to pierce through the miſts of ignorance and barbarity which hung over the dark ages. A variety of circumſtances enabled our fathers to make the moſt of this advantage. An extenſive intercourſe with foreigners made

made them acquainted with the improvements of other nations. The mild nature of the conftitution led them to form liberal notions of government; to know their own privileges, and feel their own importance. In the long ftruggle between liberty and arbitrary power, the energy of the national character had full fcope. The activity formed by thefe, extended itfelf in all directions. When precife limits were fixed to the different parts of the conftitution; when men were no longer perplexed with the loquacious fubtilty of fcholaftic divines, and the no lefs puzzling arguments of metaphyfical politicians; liberty, now firmly eftablifhed, gave to every individual a fenfe of independence, equally friendly to virtue and to enterprife. The proper mode of philofophizing had already been pointed out; and the different paths of fcience were explored with ardour and with fuccefs. Knowledge defcended to the meaneft of the people: philofophy lent her aid to the arts of life: commerce and manufactures were profecuted with induftry: wealth was multiplied,

tiplied, and elegance and luxury kept pace with increaſing riches. The various departments of ſociety affording ſcope for the exerciſe of every talent, and being open to every man who had ſpirit and ability to make his way into them, were generally filled by thoſe who were beſt qualified to occupy them with advantage. Thus, while every man contributed to the public ſtock, his talents, or ſkill, or induſtry, in that way in which they could be moſt advantageouſly employed, it happened by neceſſary conſequence that the nation advanced to an high degree of improvement.

The caſe has been very different in Ruſſia: hardly more than a ſingle century has elapſed ſince this country began to emerge from the groſſeſt barbarity. In that ſhort period much has been done: the ſublime genius of Peter the Great formed many plans of improvement, eſtabliſhed many manufactures, created many inſtitutions of public utility; and, by directing with a mighty hand the whole power of the State to the great objects he had in view, forced the

the nation to awake from the heavy ſlumber in which it was ſunk. But the national exertions were involuntary: they were the convulſive ſtruggles of a lethargic body forcibly rouſed into action, rather than the ſteady efforts of an healthful ſtate directed by the will and performed with alacrity. No ſooner was the impelling force of government weakened, than the national effort relaxed: had that been removed, the progreſs would have been ſuſpended—perhaps it might have returned in a contrary direction. During the period which elapſed between the death of Peter and the acceſſion of Elizabeth, the nation made but little progreſs. Menzikoff, who directed the public councils during the reign of Catharine the Firſt, continued to proſecute the plans of his former maſter, but with infinitely leſs diſcernment, leſs ſteadineſs, more caprice, and greater cruelty. Peter the Second was a minor; and the intrigues of the different parties, who ſtrove to acquire or to retain the direction of their young ſovereign, left little time during his ſhort reign to

think

think of public improvements. Biron, whom the Empreſs Anne truſted, came to the head of affairs with a total ignorance of the country: and although he poſſeſſed a vigorous mind, with conſiderable induſtry and talents for buſineſs, he had neither the addreſs to gain the reſpect of thoſe he commanded, nor the genius to form thoſe enlarged views of national intereſt, thoſe extenſive arrangements and combinations which enſure ſucceſs by comprehending all the accidents which might occaſion diſappointments. For the honour of Ruſſia, I paſs over the Emperor Iwan in ſilence.

Under Elizabeth the national progreſs was renewed: this Princeſs poſſeſſed a conſiderable portion of the genius of her father, adorned with an elegance of manners and a correctneſs of taſte, which were very uncommon in the nation ſhe governed. She promoted the improvement of her empire by means much more gentle than thoſe which had formerly been employed, by ſtriving to make her ſubjects comprehend the beneficial tendency of her inſtitutions,

rather than by compelling them to adopt manners, and profecute plans which they detefted, becaufe they faw no benefit to be reaped from them. The fall of Peter the Third, was in a great meafure owing to the precipitant ardour with which he attempted to introduce alterations, which the nation was not prepared to adopt.

Of the prefent Emprefs I have already given you my opinion: fhe has uniformly followed out the ideas of improvement which the genius of Peter the Great had conceived; and imitated his example, in every thing, but the feverity of his government and the rudenefs of his manners. To a moft comprehenfive mind enlightened by ftudy and reflection, fhe adds uncommon fteadinefs and application; and, as fhe difdains not to defcend to the moft minute detail of affairs, fhe has done more for the good of the empire than all the fovereigns who have intervened from the death of Peter the Firft to her own acceffion.

From this flight fketch you perceive that arts and fciences and civilization have been

forced forward in Ruſſia beyond their natural progreſs. Hence it has happened, that, while a few individuals, forming themſelves on the excellent models which have been brought within their view, have attained to a conſiderable degree of eminence; the great body of the people is ſtill, compared with civilized nations, in a very rude ſtate. Indeed, it is impoſſible to conceive that, in the ſhort period which has elapſed ſince civilization began to dawn on the Ruſſian empire, knowledge and refinement ſhould have become naturalized to the ſoil.

The picture of Ruſſia is therefore very different from that of England: it is different from that which any other European nation has exhibited at any period of its hiſtory. Where improvement has advanced in its natural order, without being hurried on by a premature culture, knowledge has deſcended from the learned to the whole body of the people. The vulgar have gradually become leſs prone to ſuperſtition, leſs unreaſonable in their prejudices, leſs rude in their manners: in a word, the im-

provement in the maſs of the people has borne ſome proportion to the progreſs of ſcience among the ſtudious. But in Ruſſia this diffuſion of knowledge and refinement has not taken place. Thoſe who have undertaken to deſcribe the ſituation of this country have often remarked, that the extremes of magnificence and beggary are generally very near neighbours: the extremes of knowledge and ignorance, of civilization and barbarity, are not leſs nearly allied. While the few who have turned their attention to literary purſuits, are on a footing with literary men in other nations, the multitude continue to cheriſh moſt of the ridiculous prejudices and legendary ſuperſtitions which degrade the dark ages. While the men of rank and faſhion rival the ſame claſs of men in the moſt civilized nations in Europe, the maſs of the people ſtill continue to be very much attached to the barbarous uſages of their forefathers. In the capital, in many of the principal towns, and in the immediate neighbourhood of extenſive manufactories, this inequality is leſs ſtriking,

ſtriking, becauſe, in theſe, men have better models continually before their eyes. But in the interior parts of the country you find very few who are advanced beyond the ſtate in which Peter the Great found them.

The cauſes of this appearance are ſufficiently obvious; beſides that knowledge has not been long enough introduced to have ſpread through the different claſſes of ſociety, and diſſipated the prejudices which long-continued ignorance had ſanctified in the minds of the people, the manner of its introduction has been unfavourable to its ſpeedy diffuſion. The great legiſlator of Ruſſia directed his attention chiefly to the higher order of his ſubjects. The ſchools which he inſtituted were well enough calculated for thoſe who had money and leiſure to attend them: but thoſe who poſſeſſed neither the one nor the other, could reap no benefit from them. He invited, it is true, into his dominions, foreigners of learning and eminence to inſtruct his ſubjects: but foreigners of learning and eminence could not be ſuppoſed to deſcend from the heights

of ſcience to teach the alphabet; and this was the point at which the inſtitution ſhould have begun, if it was intended to be generally uſeful. It is difficult to conceive what general benefit could be expected from a few teachers of the higher branches of ſcience, when the nation they were to inſtruct was not tinctured with even the rudiments of knowledge.

The ſucceſſors of Peter the Great, who have laboured to inſtruct their ſubjects, have generally fallen into the ſame error. Half the ſums which have been laviſhed on ſuch inſtitutions as the Academy of Arts and Sciences, if judiciouſly applied to encourage a great number of teachers of the elementary parts of knowledge, would have tended more to civilize the empire, than all the labours of all the learned who have ever appeared in Ruſſia. I have ſomewhere ſeen it obſerved, not inaptly, that the only benefit Ruſſia has reaped from the Academy of St. Peterſburg, was that of having acquired a calendar in the Ruſſian language, calculated for the meridian of the

capital.

capital. This is no doubt expreſſing the matter both too ſtrongly and ludicrouſly, though it is certainly true, that Ruſſia has derived more ſplendour than benefit from her academies. It is, indeed, generally the fate of ſuch inſtitutions as have for their object the good of the multitude, that their utility is almoſt their only recommendation. He who eſtabliſhes a pariſh ſchool, at which an induſtrious teacher is maintained, to inſtruct thoſe young perſons who before had not the means of knowledge within their reach, does more than the man, who, by founding a profeſſorſhip, affords the means of luxury and ſloth to one of thoſe uſeleſs beings who take refuge from the duties of life in the indolence of univerſities. Yet the endower of a pariſh ſchool reaps no other advantage from his benevolence but the conſciouſneſs of having done good; while the founder of a profeſſorſhip is celebrated for his munificence; has his name inſcribed on the walls of colleges, and his praiſes rehearſed in periodical lectures and biographical dictionaries.

Had the ſovereigns of Ruſſia directed their chief attention to civilize and inſtruct the maſs of the people, they would not, it is probable, have ſeen the learned vie with one another in praiſing them as the patrons of letters (for the learned, like other men, are generally loudeſt in their encomiums of thoſe who are moſt liberal to themſelves); but they would have had the ſatisfaction of being uſeful to their country. The world would not have ſeen ſcience enriched with the many excellent publications which have proceeded from the Academy of St. Peterſburg: but it would have ſeen a ſpectacle infinitely more intereſting—not a few individuals only, but a nation enlightened by the efforts of the government—the mind which had long been cramped with the fetters of deſpotiſm and ſuperſtition opening to receive more rational impreſſions—the ridiculous prejudices and rude uſages of a mighty empire giving place to liberal ſentiments and poliſhed manners.

LETTER IV.

Wiſe Attention of the preſent Empreſs Catharine II. to the Improvement of the lower Orders of her Subjects.—Circumſtances that retard and obſtruct the Progreſs of Improvement in Ruſſia.—Slavery of the Peaſants.—Miſapplication of Study exemplified in the Purſuits of a Ruſſian Biſhop.—Situation and Character of the Ruſſian Clergy.

Peterſburg.

I OUGHT to except the preſent Empreſs from any ſhare in the cenſure which I think due to the ſovereigns of Ruſſia, for having neglected the maſs of the people, in their endeavours to civilize their empire. She has beſtowed her chief attention on the lower orders of her ſubjects. The inſtruction of the higher claſſes had already been ſufficiently provided for. But it remained

mained for her to procure the means of improvement for thoſe who had neither money nor leiſure to attend the ſeminaries which had formerly been inſtituted. Accordingly ſhe has eſtabliſhed a number of ſchools, in various parts of her dominions, at which the children of the lower claſſes are inſtructed in the elementary parts of knowledge ſuited to their ſtation.

Many circumſtances, however, make it probable that, with all the ſupport government can beſtow, the progreſs of knowledge will not ſpeedily become extenſive in Ruſſia. The ſtate of the country is highly unfavourable to its general diffuſion. The ſlavery in which the peaſants are held checks the ſpirit of improvement in that numerous body of men. A man who can gain nothing by becoming wiſer than his fellows, will hardly be tempted to take much trouble in acquiring ſuperfluous accompliſhments, or in beſtowing them on his children. A Ruſſian peaſant has nothing that can ſtimulate him to the purſuit of knowledge. He ſees himſelf fixed

to a particular ſpot, from which he can have no hope of removing; and ſurrounded with beings ignorant and brutiſh like himſelf. His induſtry, if he has any, is ſtrictly and permanently appropriated. So many days in the week, and ſo many hours in the day, he knows he muſt labour for his maſter: and, be his own neceſſities what they may, he is ſenſible that this portion of his time muſt not be encroached upon. If he poſſeſs horſes or cows or inſtruments of his occupation, a large portion of what he can earn by them goes to the uſe of his maſter. If he has a wife and children, theſe alſo are but partially his own: his maſter may command their ſervices whenever, and in whatever manner, he pleaſes. He is hardly permitted to ſtir from his hut without his maſter's leave, nor can he earn a ſingle morſel of bread without his permiſſion. If his children are to be taught any trade, it is the maſter who orders what that trade ſhall be, and who is to be the teacher: if they are to go to ſchool, the maſter ſends and removes them

them at his pleaſure; and if they wiſh to marry, they muſt do it agreeably to his commands. In a word, a Ruſſian peaſant depends on his maſter for every thing. He cannot, it is true, be ſent *out* of the world without the forms of law; but, by the negative which every maſter poſſeſſes againſt the marriage of his people, he may be prevented from coming *into* it; and when once he has got in, his life may be made as burdenſome as tyranny and caprice can deſire.

It is to be expected that a power thus ſhamefully unlimited, will be often as ſhamefully abuſed. Accordingly the dominion of the nobles over their ſlaves is leaſt pernicious when it is leaſt active—when it leaves the peaſant to vegetate in hopeleſs indolence. If it is exerted to inſpire him with induſtry, it conſiders him merely as a machine which does more work according as it is impelled with a greater force: or as a beaſt of burden, which is forced to exert its ſtrength, by the ſpur and the whip. The improvement of

the minds of the peaſants is a project which has not yet entered into the plan of the Ruſſian landholders; it is a project that would be generally conſidered by them as chimerical, if not pernicious. The villainous policy of deſpotiſm has commonly laboured to degrade thoſe whom it would govern; and to guard, with the moſt jealous circumſpection, every approach through which light may break in on thoſe whom it dooms to bondage and darkneſs. In conſequence of this odious ſyſtem, the peaſants are trained to conſider themſelves as beings of an inferior nature; as mere inſtruments in the hand of their maſter, who ought to have no will but what he dictates, no induſtry but what he inſpires, no emulation but what he excites.—I will not indeed ſay, that this is the *univerſal* character of the Ruſſian peaſantry (for the peaſants of a few noblemen, as well as thoſe of the crown, are fortunately an exception): but I may ſay, with truth, that this character is very general, through this miſerable race of beings.

The great body of the peaſantry being thus completely ſhut out from the paths of knowledge, not only is the general progreſs of improvement retarded; but the chance of the appearance of individual talents is alſo extremely narrowed. In every country, the number of men of genius who ariſe to refine the public taſte, and improve the national character, will be in proportion to the number of thoſe who have the means of knowledge in their power; together with the proſpect of extending their reputation, and improving their fortune by their acquirements. In Ruſſia this number is extremely ſmall. Hence Ruſſia has produced very few men of diſtinguiſhed abilities in any line. Her moſt celebrated academicians have all been foreigners. She has produced hiſtorians and poets and painters; but their works will not bear a compariſon with the firſt of the ſame kind, which moſt other nations in Europe can boaſt.

It would ſeem that, in the progreſs of ſcience, the acquiring of a juſt conception of

of the proper object of literature is not one of the firſt attainments of the learned. Great literary labour, and that too ſuſtained by conſiderable talents, has been waſted, by ſome individuals in this country, on ſubjects of ſingular inutility.

A Ruſſian biſhop has ſpent a great part of his life in tranſlating the Æneid into Greek verſe. Had he tranſlated it into Ruſſian verſe, his country would have been indebted to him: but little praiſe, ſurely, is due to the efforts which aim only at erecting a monument to oſtentation. You will not, I am perſuaded, find, in the preſent age, another country in Europe, where induſtry could have been ſo ſtrangely miſapplied. The labours of this learned prelate ought, in juſtice to the fruitleſſneſs of their object, to be claſſed with the manufactures of thoſe poetical artiſts who worked their verſes into the figure of hearts, and wings, and altars, and many other ingenious devices.

It may be made a general obſervation, that the few natives of Ruſſia, who have devoted

devoted their lives to ſtudy, have attained only the praiſe which is due to the middle claſs of the learned: they have by no means equalled thoſe who ſtand in the higheſt ranks of literature.

If the condition of the peaſants be ſo highly unfavourable to the progreſs of improvement, the ſituation and character of the clergy are equally unfriendly to it. A ſmall number of the ſuperior clergy may be found eminent, among the Ruſſians, for learning and virtue; but, with this abatement, the order conſiſts of men either ignorant, or profligate, or both the one and the other.

A great proportion of the regular clergy conſiſts of the loweſt of the free people, who have taken ſanctuary from the buſineſs of their ſtations in the torpor of the monaſteries. Many regulations have been made to prevent this abuſe; but theſe regulations are calculated only to prevent the ſtate from being deprived of the labour of men whoſe induſtry might be uſeful; they are not intended to make the monaſteries

ſchools in which men might be trained to learning and piety. The law fixes the age at which men are to be admitted, and that is an age at which it would be abſurd to expect them to begin their ſtudies with any proſpect of ſucceſs. It determines alſo the number to be received into each monaſtery, the degree of reſtraint to be impoſed on them, the prayers and pſalms, and homilies, and ringings of bells, of which the ſervice muſt conſiſt, and other ſuch momentous particulars: but the only point in which ſuch eſtabliſhments can be uſeful, the education to which they ſhould be ſubſervient, is left, with only general recommendations, to the judgment of thoſe who preſide over each monaſtery.

From ſuch eſtabliſhments little benefit can be expected;—certainly, very little is derived from them. They however do ſome good. Part of thoſe connected with them receive ſuch an education as might have been got in the monaſteries of England three centuries ago. They learn to read and write. Some of them acquire a knowledge of

of the Latin language; nay, even Greek may be learnt in ſome monaſteries. But the number of the clergy who acquire theſe laſt accompliſhments is very ſmall. I have accoſted a great many of them in Latin, but have met with only a ſingle inſtance of a prieſt who underſtood me. The lives of the regular clergy, inſtead of being devoted to literary purſuits or any other uſeful purpoſe, are ſlumbered away in the inanition of indolence, interrupted by the irkſome frequency of prayers without devotion, and praiſes without ſentiment.

I have often ſtepped into their churches to obſerve their ſervice. The whole ſeemed to me to be artificial; and formed ſo exactly on the ſame model, that even the pauſes, and tones, and geſtures, which I have obſerved in any one church, were preciſely ſimilar to thoſe I have obſerved in every other. Some parts of the ſervice were uniformly hurried over with the moſt indecent rapidity. I could hardly have ſuppoſed it poſſible for the human organs of ſpeech to acquire ſuch an aſtoniſhing volubility. This portion of the ſervice admitted

mitted of ſome variety in the execution, according to the ſtrength or weakneſs of the lungs of him who performed it. But every clergyman whom I have heard read it, hurried over, in an uniformly ſuſtained voice, as many words as he could poſſibly pronounce at one inſpiration; then ſtopped— no matter whether at the end of a ſentence, or word, or ſyllable, ſo long as to fetch breath; and ſo proceeded to the end of the leſſon. Other portions of the ſervice were uttered in a hollow, grumbling uniformity of tone; and with the features formed into an expreſſion of ſuch horror as one might ſuppoſe a coward to exhibit when the executioner was fixing the halter about his neck. Betwixt theſe two extremes are many intermediate gradations; but none of them approaching to the natural tones and inflexions of the voice.

The parochial clergy are ſtill leſs reſpectable than the regular. Nothing more is neceſſary to the obtaining of this character than being married, and being able to read and write. The firſt of theſe qualifications

is indiſpenſable; the others, being leſs eſſential, are more eaſily diſpenſed with. I have often heard it affirmed, that the parochial clergy are the moſt worthleſs ſet of men in the empire. In ſuch a compariſon it would certainly be difficult to determine to whom the preference is due. I therefore think this charge too general to be true, although there is, doubtleſs, abundant room for improvement in this claſs of men. Deſpiſed by the higher claſſes of ſociety, they are reduced to the neceſſity of aſſociating with the meaneſt of the people: hence, inſtead of riſing to the rank of reſpectable citizens, and aſpiring to the praiſe of learning and virtue, they retain the meanneſs of ſpirit, the low ſenſuality, and the diſguſting vices of thoſe with whom they aſſociate.

The poorneſs of the eccleſiaſtical livings ſeems to be the chief cauſe of the degradation of the clerical character in Ruſſia. Moſt of the benefices afford nothing more than a ſcanty ſubſiſtence, and that of the pooreſt kind. To qualify men for ſuch appointments, literary accompliſhments, or indeed

accompliſhments of any kind, cannot be required. It is impoſſible to ſuppoſe that men ſhould ſubmit to much previous diſcipline, as the means of puſhing themſelves into a profeſſion which can reward them with barely the articles neceſſary for their ſubſiſtence; a profeſſion in which even the prizes may be conſidered as blanks. In this reſpect, the regular clergy have ſome advantage over the parochial; and the effects of it are apparent in the difference between the two orders. The dignitaries of the church are all choſen from the regular clergy. Every man of this order has therefore a chance, though a wondrous ſmall one, of riſing in his profeſſion. Hence among the regular clergy ſome men of learning and virtue are found; while among the parochial clergy you will hardly find an individual eminent in any reſpect.

I ſhall not enter into the policy of thoſe reaſons of ſtate which induced the ſovereigns of Ruſſia to deprive the church of her revenues. I am no advocate for an opulent eccleſiaſtical eſtabliſhment; for I have gene-

rally obſerved, that riches are apt to induce habits very different from thoſe which chriſtianity ſhould form in its teachers. But Ruſſia affords the moſt unequivocal proof, that poverty is not leſs inconſiſtent with the purity of manners, and reſpectability of character, which we look for in the public teachers of a pure and benevolent religion. Prieſts, like other men, muſt poſſeſs a certain rank in ſociety, to enable them to ſupport a proper character: they muſt be raiſed above the temptations which ſpring from want, before they can be ſuppoſed ſolicitous about the attainment of ornamental accompliſhments. The Ruſſian clergy are not generally looked upon as gentlemen; and therefore they cannot be ſuppoſed to be very anxious about acting agreeably to a character to which they are not allowed to lay claim. They are condemned to hopeleſs penury; and therefore they cannot reaſonably be expected to aim at attainments, which, without improving their fortune, could only reflect a painful luſtre on the mean condition to which they are doomed.

Although

Although however the ecclesiastical livings be thus miserably scanty, some monasteries and churches possess great wealth, in plate, in robes, and in jewels. You can hardly imagine any thing more shewy than the appearance of the priests of these churches on their festival days. But if the wind should chance to blow aside the sacred vestment, you would probably feel a degree of disgust not easily described, at seeing shoes and stockings, and breeches and shirt, of the coarsest materials, generally ragged, and always dirty, appearing from under robes of the most superb and costly embroidery.

This situation of the clergy is highly unfavourable to the general improvement of the country. In all the enlightened nations of Europe, the priests form the most numerous body of the learned. They are also the class on whom the civilization of the lower orders of the people chiefly depends. They are more uniformly spread over the country than any other description of men of letters. The vulgar are intimately connected with them, and have a high respect

for their opinion. Hence they have it more than any other claſs of men in their power, to perpetuate error, or to diffuſe the knowledge of the truth through the maſs of the people. A prieſthood, like that of Ruſſia, who are themſelves tinctured with all the prejudices of the vulgar, may ſerve to obſtruct, but cannot promote, the progreſs of improvement: and while the church-livings are ſo ſcanty, it is not probable that men of abilities will be induced to enter into ſuch an unprofitable profeſſion.

LETTER V.

Winter Dreſs and Diverſions of the Ruſſians. —Manners and Cuſtoms.—Ruſſian Jubilee. —Ancient and modern Dreſſes of the Ruſſians.

St. Peterſburg, January 1789.

DEAR SIR,

HAVING in my preceding letters endeavoured, in the manner of poets and hiſtorians, to intereſt you in my ſubject by a very general ſketch of what is moſt prominent and ſtriking in the viciſſitudes, manners and cuſtoms of Ruſſia, I ſhall from time to time, as leiſure may permit, or circumſtances and opportunities invite, communicate to you whatever may appear to be anywiſe inſtructive or amuſing in this metropolis and country; which, if I may be allowed ſo vulgar a figure on ſo vaſt and comprehenſive a ſubject, is a kind of half-way-

way-houſe between Europe and Aſia. It may probably happen that I may quit and reſume the ſame ſubjects again and again. But the ſame objects ſeen in different lights, and under different ſets or aſſociations of ideas, may ſuggeſt different ſentiments and reflections. I do not pretend to ſyſtematiſe or dogmatiſe in any thing: and even my arrangements muſt be chiefly caſual. I muſt, in all reſpects, plead the privileges of epiſtolary correſpondence, free and wild, above rule or art; though faithful to truth and to nature.

The firſt day of the year is a great day at court: every ſtar, garter, and ribbon, is waiting upon Her Imperial Majeſty. The cannons, drums, and trumpets are all at work: theſe are the drawing-room furniture of an imperial palace.

It is now deſperately cold weather, no leſs than twenty-five degrees of Reaumur. I ſhall be frozen to a ſtatue. We drive about the ſtreets and upon the Neva in ſledges of a different conſtruction from thoſe uſed for travelling; ſome reſembling a ſmall boat, and

and others the body of an open chaiſe. The higher ranks in general, however, uſe their coaches, placed upon a ſledge frame: and it is merely for an hour's amuſement when they drive in ſledges.

Every gentleman and lady of the lower order, as long as they have a copic to ſpend, lays it out cheerfully in hiring the ſtreet-ſledges, ranged at all the corners *pro bono publico*. They look like ſo many Phaetons by the ſpeed of their horſes; only their carriages have no wheels.

The iſhwhoſhics, or ſledge-drivers, make it a point of honour to paſs every other brother of the reins; they uſe no whips: there is a continual ſtruggle for ſuch pre-eminence. Their horſes are excellent; few of them worth leſs than twenty or thirty guineas. The iſhwhoſhics, by a peculiar management of the reins, make them anſwer the double purpoſe of a bridle and whip; and indeed they have but to ſpeak to their geldings if they wiſh them to run; they cannot ſtop them ſo eaſily. I have never ſeen horſes with more ſpirit. Peter I. uſed thoſe ſtreet-

ſtreet-conveyances in common with his ſubjects; and it frequently happened that he had not money in his pocket to pay the fare; on which occaſion he borrowed of ſome perſon or other to diſcharge it. The Ruſſian beau attends his miſtreſs in a ſledge, ſitting with her, or ſtanding behind. The grand field where they parade is the Neva. It is the race-ground where the gentlemen diſplay their expertneſs at driving, and the fleetneſs of their nags; a part of the frozen river is railed in for the purpoſe. But, in ordinary, there is racing every where, and it is well if one eſcapes being rode down. This gives conſtant exerciſe to the eyes in watching, as well as to the feet in getting clear off: and this, I preſume, may be the cauſe of the quick ſtep and look of the Peterſburghers. There is a perpetual flight in the ſtreets to preſerve legs and arms; and the word *Pady*, or "Get out of the way," reſounds from morning to night. Street-travelling is much cheaper here in winter than in ſummer. The ſledges are very numerous: many of the Ruſſians in the country,

try, whoſe work is put an end to by the froſt, come into town with their horſes, and commence hackney ſledgemen. When ſummer returns, the gentlemen and ladies are turned out of their carriages, and again preſs the pavement with their feet. The wheel carriages are double and triple the expence of the winter equipage. There are no regulations for the hire: a circumſtance which very frequently calls forth the moſt violent exertions of oratory. The iſhwhoſhic knows by a glance of your countenance how much to aſk. If you are a foreigner, he demands five times his fare; if a Ruſſian, he only aſks double; calculating upon receiving a half of his demand from each. The hirer makes an offer *en paſſant*; it is refuſed, and he walks away: the iſhwhoſhic endeavours to perſuade him to give more, until the gentleman is out of hearing; when, being convinced that arguments are fruitleſs, he drives after him, and receives the paſſenger without exchanging another word. Thoſe ſledges actually add to the ſeverity of the Ruſſian climate. The quick-

quickneſs of their motion, if the wind is in your face, occaſions, beſides the increaſed coldneſs, a ſenſation as if your brow was cut with a razor. Againſt this you muſt defend yourſelf as you can by the aid of a muff, which covering the whole of your face, you ſit very comfortably while taking an airing in the dark. The ladies have the advantage of their male relations: they paint inch thick; which, if it does not add to their beauty, at leaſt prevents them from being froſt-bitten. I ſee the fair damſels galloping in twenty degrees of Reaumur, without even a bonnet; while the ſons of Mars, ſwords, bucklers, *and all*, are rolled up in ſable. Vanity in our ſex has the ſame effect as paint in the other. A Ruſſian beau of the firſt magnitude deſpiſes a warm dreſs, as it ſpoils his ſhapes—he ſtruts in ſilk ſtockings, a hat and cockade; and as often as the cold will permit, he throws his fur cloak aſide, to diſplay his ſilk breeches and ſatin veſt.

The police are very attentive to preſerve the people from uſing improper freedoms,

or

or expoſing themſelves to this ungracious climate. The theatres, and all places of public amuſement, are ſhut when the cold is ſeventeen degrees of Reaumur. A cuſtom of the Ruſſian nobility and gentry makes this regulation abſolutely neceſſary. Aſiatic pomp prevails here, as much as at Iſpahan or Delhi, in defiance of ice and ſtorms. They make their attendants wait with their carriages wherever they go, for one, or for ten hours, as it happens, let the cold be ever ſo violent. The miſerable grins of theſe half-frozen wretches convince me that it is not their choice: the coachmen are ſometimes frozen to death upon their boxes. I ſhall ſpeak of the hardineſs of the natives when I have ſeen it. Could I forget for a moment ſuch barbarity, this affected pomp of frozen attendants would be truly laughable. Every gentleman, who is entitled by his rank rather than by his fortune to be drawn by ſix horſes, muſt have that number: but no regard is had to quality, ſize, or colour; ſo that it is common to ſee among the ſix horſes four of differ-

ent

ent tints. The coachmen have beards hanging to their girdles, and from every hair depends an icicle: the poſtillions are all young boys blowing their fingers: add to this portrait the ſheep-ſkin doublet, and a cap of the ſame ſtuff, as black as if the ſkins were already prepared for ſhoe-leather. To contraſt this ſpectacle, the great man within, and his two or three liverymen behind the chaiſe, are covered with gold lace. Many of the nobility go to the other extreme; and the magnificence of their carriages, their horſes, and their ſervants, is becoming only of crowned heads.

The Ruſſian jubilee has commenced. Ice-hills are erected upon the Neva, and all the apparatus of a Bartholomew fair. The river is crowded with the beſt and with the worſt company: much is the noiſe of men, and dogs, and boys. There muſt be at leaſt thirty thouſand people aſſembled. Her Imperial Majeſty Catharine II. drove amidſt her ſubjects, in a ſledge, followed by ſeveral others with the attending officers of the court. A party of the huſſar guards eſcorted

escorted Her Majesty. The same day appeared the Grand Duke and Duchess; and after them came their children, the young Grand Dukes and Duchesses. We had with us the whole imperial house of Russia, and they were received with every demonstration of loyalty and affection. The severe winter procured the Neva this honour. These assemblies do not take place upon the river unless when the ice has attained such a thickness as may insure safety. There is no riot with all this bustle; not a surly look nor a single blow given or received. The Russians are so busy in drinking, singing, and laughing, that they have no time for quarrelling. The police are watchful; but there does not appear to be much reason for their vigilance. The temples of Bacchus and of Venus now open their gates. These are built here of a construction proper for the climate, having stoves, folding doors, and double windows. The staggering votaries of the former make the air resound with their songs. A Russian never walks by himself when he gets

drunk, if he can lay hold of a friend: three or four ſtagger in concert, and, very ſocially, knock their heads together. They get drunk in company, and riſe and fall as one man. They do not tipple for hours; they ſwallow as much in two or three minutes as completely does the buſineſs they came about. If there be no ſophas at hand, they can make a ſhift to lie wherever they tumble. With regard to love and to dreſs, a beard a yard long is in high eſtimation among the fair nymphs of Ruſſia. The Scotch have a merry air, beginning with

> The carle he came o'er the craft
> With his beard new ſhaven.

Such a preparation in a Ruſſian lover would go near to ruin his ſuit. The commonalty have ſtill a great veneration for this fringe of human hair, notwithſtanding the efforts of their monarchs to root it out; and it is only thoſe depending upon government, in the army and navy, who have yet complied with the cuſtom and wiſh of the Court. Thoſe who retain their beards retain

retain likewiſe the ancient dreſs; the long ſwaddling coat, either of ſkins, or of coarſe cloth lined with ſkins, in winter; and in ſummer, of cloth only. About their middle they have a ſaſh of any colour; but what they moſtly affect is green or yellow. They wear trowſers inſtead of breeches and ſtockings: their limbs are, beſides, wrapt in manyfolds of woollen ſtuffs to keep them warm; and above all they wear boots. Their ſhirts are faſhioned as women's; their necks expoſed to the cold, and as hard and impenetrable, from this practice, as a piece of adamant. Government continues to exert every nerve to compel the ſubjects to adopt the German dreſs. The clergy alone excepted, none can procure any place, any favour from Court, upon other condition than baniſhing the Aſiatic ſheep-ſkin robes. The worn-out veteran retires with a penſion, upon the expreſs terms of never again aſſuming the habit of his fathers. But ſo zealouſly attached are the multitude to former manners, and ſo honourable do they eſteem

 them,

them, that a Ruſſian dreſſed in his beard and gown tells you by his looks that he has not proſtituted the memory of his anceſtors.

The dreſs of the women is the reverſe of the men both in faſhion and colour; every part of it being as ſhort and tight as decency will allow, and as gaudy as their copics will admit. The dreſs of the Ruſſian women is exactly the ſame with that of the highland women in Scotland: both have the ſhort jacket, the ſtriped petticoat, and the tartan plaid; and both too, in general, have a napkin rolled about their head. The Ruſſian women are, however, far more elegant and rich in their attire: nor is gold lace wanting to ſet off their charms, any more than the art of painting. The young generation are modernizing theſe antic veſtments; the ſtiff embroidered napkin is ſupplanted by one of flowing ſilk; the jacket and petticoat are of muſlin or other fine ſtuffs; and the plaid is exchanged for a ſilk or ſatin cloak, in the cold ſeaſon lined with fur. The better claſs of females wear vel-

vet

vet boots. The drefs of the higher ranks is after the French and Englifh fafhion: and all muft have a covering of fur fix months of the year. Thus equipped, the prince and the peafant are hurled in their chaifes and fledges through the dreary Scythian winter.

LETTER VI.

At Peterſburg the moſt ſtriking Aſſemblage of all Nations.—The native good Taſte of the Ruſſians for Muſic.—The Ruſſian Theatre.

St. Peterſburg, January 1789.

DEAR SIR,

I FEEL myſelf here as in another world; the dreſs, the manners, and cuſtoms of the people are ſo different from thoſe of other nations in Europe.

Beſides the variety of nations which compoſe the Ruſſian empire, in my daily walk through the city I meet with Engliſh, Danes, French, Swedes, Italians, Spaniards, Portugueſe, Venetians, Poles, Germans, Perſians, and Turks: the laſt, priſoners from Oczakow. This aſſembly is a natural maſquerade, and no city upon earth preſents any amuſement of this kind in ſuch perfection

perfection as Peterſburg. In other great cities the variety of ſtrangers is not ſo diſtinguiſhable as here; owing to their accommodating themſelves to the dreſs of the country in which they reſide or ſojourn, in order to prevent the mob from ſtaring at them.

In Peterſburg there is no need of this compliance: let foreigners be dreſſed ever ſo oddly, they will find in every lane ſubjects in the Ruſſian empire to keep them in countenance. She brings into this ball her various ſwarms, from the ſnowy mountains of Kamſchatka to the fertile plains of the Ukraine—a ſpace of 4000 miles!—Siberians, Tonguſians, Calmucs, and an endleſs train of Tartar nations, the Fins, the Coſſacs, &c.

Peterſburg is a ſtrange city even to the Ruſſians: it increaſes daily with new recruits from every corner of the empire. Ruſſia reſembles an heir newly come to his eſtate. She is only beginning to learn, and ſeems ſtruck with her own importance. This young heir has got his different maſ-

ters to attend him: the Engliſh maſter is teaching him the art of navigation and commerce; the French, as uſual, to dance and to dreſs; the Italian is drawing plans for his houſe, and teaching him to ſing; the German makes him wheel to the right and to the left, and teaches him all the other arts of war.

The truth is, the Ruſſians are going on too faſt in affecting as well as attaining improvement. Foreigners have put too many things into their heads; and, I believe, are picking their pockets, by the idle ſchemes with which they amuſe them. The Ruſſians, in general, look upon foreigners as a kind of ſuperior beings, in regard to the arts and ſciences. They value themſelves chiefly upon their valour, and the ſtrength of their army and navy.

The improvement that firſt attracted my attention was the theatre: in the depth of a ſix months winter, this naturally attracts us from other objects perhaps more valuable. They have French, German, and Ruſſian comedians, and an Italian opera. The maſquerade is a favourite amuſement

at

at this dreary ſeaſon. There are ſuch great diſtinctions of ranks without doors, that they are happy at times to ſink and forget theſe in a maſque. On the contrary, in England, we are ſo much upon a level, without and within doors, that it would be no amuſement or relaxation to repeat the ſame ſcenes : and this I take to be the reaſon that we have few maſquerades.

The French actors are highly eſteemed ; and I aſſure you the Ruſſian players are no leſs ſo, in comedy. The latter have a peculiar turn for works of humour, but in tragedy they cut a poor figure. Tragedy has no charms in their eyes ; and I am very much of their way of thinking. There is a ſufficient number of melancholy ſcenes preſented every day in real life : I prefer, with the Moſcovites, to ſing and dance while we may. This turn for humour in the Ruſſians is attended with a fault : their comedy too often approaches to farce. They enjoy with all their ſouls their native operas ; in which are introduced rural ſcenery and manners, and native airs. Were I not afraid

afraid of your calling me Goth, I would tell you I prefer many of the Ruſs ſongs to the Italian: they are ſimple, but exquiſitely pleaſing; the Ruſſians forget every thing elſe while they are liſtening to them. Even among the waggoners and other ruſtics, we ſhall ſometimes find five or ſix dividing their voices into as many keys, and producing a concert no way contemptible. They are ſelf-taught, and do not underſtand what tenor, or baſs, or treble means. I wonder the Italians have not pretended that ſome David Rizzio had viſited this country, ſeeing they are jealous of their quavers.

The Ruſſian inſtruments of muſic are ſimple as their ſongs. Of theſe the balileka is the favourite of the common people. This is a kind of guitar with two ſtrings: the performer places it upon his knee, and ſtrikes the wire with ſuch art, as to move ſome correſponding chord in the breaſt of every Ruſſian within hearing. Several of their other inſtruments reſemble thoſe of the ancient Romans; particularly the pipe of

Pan is matched by their whiftle of nine or ten joints, placed at each other's fides, of unequal lengths.

You muft always expect to hear poetry mentioned with mufic. Ruffia has produced two excellent poets in Somonofoff and Sumorokoff. Before their time, the Ruffian ftage was difgraced by burlefque obfcenities, equally offenfive to good fenfe and decency: and thefe indecencies were often incorporated with fcenes borrowed from fcripture. We are told by Stael-hen, that he has feen the Emprefs Elizabeth's maids of honour act a comedy, fometimes in unfurnifhed houfes, and at others in a hay-loft about the court ftables. Other ftrolling companies acted in the public fquares: their exhibitions were often little better than the buffooneries acted at Bartholomew fair in Smithfield.

Fedor Wolkot, the GARRICK of Ruffia, after exhibiting for fome time fuch fcenes as have been juft mentioned, introduced upon his ftage the plays of Lomonofoff and Sumorokoff. Wolkot painted the decorations

of

of his theatre with his own hands, and assisted in the making up of dresses. He very frequently gave a play gratis, in order to inspire his countrymen with a taste for the drama. But though the pieces of Lomonosoff and Sumorokoff were well received, his countrymen, for many years, continued to prefer before all theatrical entertainments, the riotous amusements of the tavern. The Empress Elizabeth in the year 1752 brought Wolkot and his company to St. Petersburg, where, upon the court stage, he played the tragedies of Sumorokoff. In order to improve this company, she established a national theatre, on which Wolkot was the chief actor. And for the purpose of exciting a spirit of emulation, she appropriated about a thousand pounds sterling, to be divided amongst the actors according to their abilities; and allowed them, besides, to act once a week for the public and their own benefit. Besides all this, the Court bore the whole expence of the play. Theatrical improvements were made from time to time; and along with the productions of Sumorokoff

Sumorokoff tranſlations of Moliere and ſome other French comic writers were played. The Empreſs Catharine augmented the ſum appropriated by Elizabeth for the ſalary of the comedians to about four thouſand pounds ſterling. Two celebrated actors, Wolkot and his brother, were ennobled; and the Empreſs gave them eſtates and peaſants (for the former are in no value in Ruſſia without the latter —ſo that in the north as well as in the ſouth of Europe *manerial* lords are found among players *. Talents of all kinds ought to be rewarded: but is it not extravagant, and indeed indecent, to confound a good player with a great general? a Roſcius with a Scipio? When Catharine gave land with the rank of nobility to the Wolkots, what more could ſhe reſerve to Prince Potemkin and

* This alludes to the circumſtance of Mr. Garrick's purchaſing the manor of Hendon. This, however, confers not any rank or order of nobility. It might have been purchaſed by a hangman if he had been rich enough: and it has now actually paſſed into the hands of an apothecary.

Count

Count Romanzow? I bluſh to think that players, and ſome ſilly poets, as well as patriots and heroes, are to be found in Weſtminſter Abbey: Henderſon and Garrick as well as the Duke of Marlborough and Earl of Chatham.

LETTER VII.

A Tragi-comedy performed by Ruſſian Strolling Players—An Hiſtorical Play written by Her Imperial Majeſty Catharine II.

Ingria, near St. Peterſburg, Feb. 1789.

I AM juſt arrived from attending two Ruſſian village girls to the theatre. A number of ſtrolling players from St. Peterſburg have honoured the villagers, reſiding in the midſt of a wood, with a viſit. The theatre of this ſtraggling village conſiſts of one room about twenty-five feet ſquare. A blanket, very properly in this ſeaſon and climate, ſupplied the place of a curtain.

The manager had, this morning, paraded the village, dreſſed like a harlequin, and beating a drum. Another of the actors performed upon the French horn. They promiſed

promiſed to the inhabitants of the village an entertainment conſiſting of divers curious and novel pieces, tragical and comical. The performance did not begin until the arrival of the great folks, viz. the village bailiff, his wife, and daughter, who were received by all the audience with repeated marks of applauſe. The gentleman and ladies being ſeated in the ſtage box, on the end of the firſt form neareſt the actors, the blanket roſe.

The firſt act conſiſted of the School for Scandal, with abridgments, however, as well as variations; which were the moſt intereſting, as they ſhewed the taſte and turn of the Ruſſians. The manager's wife, in the character of Lady Teazle, having given ear to the addreſſes of her gallant, lies down upon the floor, and a mock engagement takes place before this delicate audience. Bearded faces puſhed forward in every direction to behold this amorous exhibition, and grinned a very high degree of ſatisfaction. The ladies tittered, and held down their heads. Full of love and

love's

love's diſports, the pair fall aſleep, and are caught in this ſituation by Sir Peter Teazle, who finds both Joſeph and his lady without any ſcreen before them. Imagine to yourſelf the conſternation of Lady Teazle, when ſhe was awaked by a kick with her huſband's foot; and Joſeph with the application of a whip acroſs his ſhoulders. The frighted Joſeph roſe, and in a hurry ran off without pronouncing one ſentiment. The unfortunate fair one wept, and in a ſong told us how the baſe man had deceived her.

Another comedy, the title of which I do not recollect, was preſented in the ſecond act. The principal character was performed by the ſame lady, the manager's wife, who again was nearly caught tripping in an exhibition ſimilar to the former.

Tragedy drew her dagger in the third act. The cup remained with the audience, who refreſhed themſelves between the acts with brandy. A vaunting foreigner arrives in Ruſſia: by his ribbon I found they meant Prince Naſſau. He tells the audience that the Ruſſian officers could do nothing; and promiſes to do wonders for her Imperial

 Majeſty.

Majeſty. The other tragedian, in the character of a Ruſſian nobleman and naval officer, takes fire at this, and, having borrowed a white jacket and trowſers from one of the auditory, and fixing the order of St. George upon his ſtately ſhoulders, he challenges this boaſting ſtranger. Many thruſts were given and received; at laſt, as might be expected, Prince Naſſau fell: the blanket fell too by accident, and covered his bleeding body from the rejoicing company, who expreſſed the greateſt encomiums upon the champion of their country, and deteſtation of foreigners.

A new hiſtorical play was lately produced at the grand theatre at Peterſburg. Report gives it to the pen of the Empreſs. It alludes to the ancient hiſtory of Ruſſia, and of the connection between the Ruſſian and Grecian ſovereigns, and of their intermarriages together. Some petty princes who diſturbed the primitive dukedom of Ruſſia, whoſe capital city was Kioff, are brought in chains before the Czar. Kioff, ſituated upon the elevated banks of the river Nieper, is

is pictured in a beautiful ſcene. The galley fleet appear afloat upon the river. The Duke is buſied in the hall of audience, receiving and ſending away diſpatches to various provinces, and giving orders to his ſurrounding miniſters.

His ſon the young Duke ſets off for Byzantium, and marries a Grecian princeſs. The royal pair viſit in his capital their Ruſſian father. A moveable ſcene repreſents the diſtant march of their eſcort; numerous armies, waggons, camels loaded with precious articles: ſquadrons of cavalry guard the young Princeſs and her huſband in their triumphal car.

The heralds with trumpets announce their arrival. The proceſſion paſſes along the ſtage: the officers of the Grecian court, in their proper habits and inſignia: the Princeſs's maids lead or follow in the proceſſion, according to their ranks. The Duke receives them in his hall of audience. The young Prince conducts his veiled bride to the preſence. The ſuperior lady of the Ruſſian court, who appears to be a prieſteſs, ap-

proaches the Grecian Empreſs, and pours myrrh or other pounded herbs upon her head. The Duke entreats her to unveil: an officer of the court, or prieſt, at a reſpectful diſtance, touches the Princeſs's veil with a wand, and lifts it off. She appears crowned, and in the Grecian habit; and making her obeiſance to the Duke, he embraces and ſalutes her. Attended to her chamber by her own and the Ruſſian female *maids of honour*, the latter undreſs the Princeſs, and again dreſs her in the Ruſſian habit. The Princeſs reſumes her veil, and, ſeated at the head of her ladies, the Ruſſian female dancers and ſingers entertain her with their performances. The Princeſs, having remained for ſome time at Kioff, takes leave of the Duke, inviting him to viſit the court of Byzantium.

The next ſcene again preſents to view the city of Kioff. The Duke embarks in his galley, for Byzantium, and ſails down the Nieper. As the entertainments given at his own court were ſimple, and characteriſtic of the manners of his nation, ſo the ſplendid reception he met with from his Grecian

daughter

daughter was equally ſo of the power and greatneſs of her empire. The heralds announce the arrival of the Duke. The Grecian Emperor and Empreſs riſe from their throne in the audience chamber, and receive him, as do the numerous and ſplendid courtiers, with every mark of honour and reverence. The Duke's heralds read a liſt of his titles. I ſuſpect, from the length of this liſt, that Catharine II. had added ſeveral not then exiſting in the perſons of the Ruſſian Dukes.

A table is ſuperbly covered: the goblets and cups were of maſſy ſilver, ſent from the palace at Peterſburg. The whole ſervice was of the ſame metal, as well as many pieces of pure gold.

The mock ſovereigns wore crowns of gold, ſparkling with real diamonds of great value. A guard ſtood behind the ſcenes to prevent any attempt upon the rich *ſcenery*, which had never before been introduced into theatres.

The Grecian Empreſs ſat at the head of the table, the Duke upon her right, and her

hufband upon her left hand. The courtiers and ladies of the court ftood around them, but other attendants waited at table. At intervals a band of mufic, Grecian dancers and fingers, perform before the auguft affemblage. The fovereigns rife from table. The Duke leads the Emprefs to the amphitheatre, which appears in the next fcene erected round the ftage. This prefented a new and uncommon profpect. It was crowded with the gentlemen and ladies of the Grecian court, and with the Ruffian courtiers who had accompanied the Duke in their national habits. The Grecian and Ruffian guards in their ancient national uniforms filled up the remaining fpace. The Duke, the Emprefs, and her hufband, were feated in the fame gallery upon the right, but divided from their courtiers by a partition; and their place otherways diftinguifhed. The Grecian fencers, gladiators, wreftlers, fhooters with the bow, in their turns difplayed their dexterity: fometimes they contended in parties, fometimes only two fought for the prize. The foot racers

wheeled around the poſts, and preſſed on to the goal. The conquerors were crowned with laurel; they carried too the arms of the vanquiſhed, who walked around the ſtage behind them; and all, as they paſſed the ſovereigns and courtiers, ſaluted them.

A ſecond ſtage was erected beneath, and at the further end of the amphitheatre. A repreſentation of the ancient drama was exhibited. Two actors alternately appeared, and delivered diſcourſes from the plays of Euripides. The audience were tranſported into old times, and imagined themſelves ſeated in Rome or in Athens. At the concluſion of this drama, conſiſting of ſeveral acts, between which the audience were entertained, as uſual, with muſic, a ſtair was conſtructed to the gallery where the ſovereigns and miniſters were ſeated; they deſcended by this ſtair, railed with the bucklers, the banners and ſpears of the conquerors in the preceding games. The curtain dropped amidſt the huzzas of the guards and the ſound of trumpets.

LETTER VIII.

Easter Holidays.—The River Neva.—Russian Climate.—Winter Market at Petersburg, a great Curiosity.—The Benefit which the Russians derive from severe Frosts.

St. Petersburg, April 1789.

THE Easter holidays have ended, and the Bartholomew gambols are again renewed, but not upon the ice. The Neva is beginning to shake off its icy chain: it is only when he is a bound slave that people venture to tread upon him.

One of the squares of the city was fixed upon for the exhibitions. Wooden huts are erected, within which the multitude are entertained with *brandy, and theatrical amusements.* Besides the dramatic scenes in those huts, there were a variety of sways, upon which

which the Ruſſian lads and laſſes mounted together into the air. I ſaw ſeveral Turks ſwinging along with their conquerors. I was happy to ſee the poor Mahomedan priſoners in ſuch good ſpirits. Indeed they are treated here with much humanity. Peter I. had, no doubt, brought the model of thoſe entertainments from London or Amſterdam, as the beſt to be had at that time. They do not appear to be of Ruſſian origin. It is ſurpriſing to view the firſt nobility of the empire, driving in their carriages around the circle which holds the rabble, ſtaring at one another, and at the mob, for hours together.

The Neva, by the continual froſts ſince the beginning of November laſt, has attained an amazing degree of thickneſs, and it would ſeem to require a whole ſummer to melt it. Were the river to remain ſhut until the ice was melted, there would be no navigation on it before July or Auguſt. The current of the river, when the ice turns weak and porous by the melting of the ſnow upon its ſurface, hurls this body away and clears the Neva;

Neva; and the Neva, in like manner, clears the lake of Lodoga. Soon after the Neva ice is gone, the rotten ice of the Lodoga is drawn into the river by its current. Nature has cut out a river from moſt of the northern lakes, to drain them of their ice. The intenſe heat of the polar ſummer aſſiſts in this work, and to render them ſoon navigable for the purpoſe of fiſhing and tranſporting of merchandiſe. An intenſe ſun might reduce the ice to a perfect honey-comb: but, while it floats, it incommodes all navigation, and therefore the rivers are abſolutely neceſſary to diſperſe it.

It has been aſſerted, that the northern winter is the beſt ſeaſon for tranſporting merchandiſe, from the uninterrupted ſmoothneſs of the roads over the frozen land and water. This is ſo far true: it accelerates the tranſporting of goods in ſledges, from inland parts to the principal towns ſituated near lakes and rivers, to be ſent by water in ſummer, to the great marts of trade, as Peterſburg, Archangel, and Riga: but the goods could not be brought to theſe laſt ports by land

carriage,

carriage, from one or two thoufand miles diftance, allowing the roads to be ever fo fmooth, without raifing the price to an enormous height. It is by fhipping alone that the Ruffian commerce can effectually be fupported. Peterfburg is fupplied by land carriage in the winter with provifions; not becaufe land carriage is cheaper or more convenient than carriage by water in fummer, but becaufe the provifions cannot be brought at any other feafon with fafety. A live ftock cannot be brought to market at the fame expence, as when killed and packed at the place where it was fed: and befides the expence of driving, a live ftock would require to be fatted at their arrival. When killed, cold weather is the only feafon, in a country where the fummer is fo warm, for tranfporting the carcafes to market, frefh as well as to falt, and conveying provifions to the cellars in diftant towns for fummer ufe. Wild game, and fifh in particular, could not be conveyed frefh, in any other manner, from a diftance of many hundred miles, than in a frozen ftate. I

need only add, that fish here is the principle article of consumption. The frozen market in Petersburg is a curiosity peculiar to Russia. It is not held upon the river, but in one of the great buzars, or squares, in the suburbs. Here is a very extensive picture of dead life—a kind of resurrection of quadrupeds. The peasants who sell this collection to the inhabitants, place the dead animals, stripped of their skins, upon their legs, and in different postures. A stranger beholds too, with wonder, an innumerable variety of the feathered creation—an extensive collection of zoology: every tint with which nature has painted the feathered inhabitants of earth and air, is strewed around at the foot of tyrant man! The timid hare, clothed in his winter robes, is not permitted to wear them long, but is dragged to swell the various feast.

This vast wholesale warehouse supplies the other buzars in the city, where beef is cut down and sold in the smallest quantities. The fish, from a size not two inches in length, to the fine salmon and sturgeon,

from

from three to five feet, are heaped in frozen piles. The young fry of the lakes and rivers ſhould not be ſuffered to be ſold in the markets: it will in time exhauſt the liberal gift which Providence has beſtowed upon this nation, in filling her lakes and rivers with every variety of the finny kind.

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LETTER IX.

Of the Tartar Army at Peterſburg.—Reflections upon War.—Of the Propriety of driving the Turks out of Europe—and giving a King to Greece from the Deſcendants of Peter the Great.

St. Peterſburg, April 1789.

DEAR SIR,

THIS is the moſt diſagreeable ſeaſon of the year in this province. The melting of the ſnow renders the ſtreets and roads a perfect mire. The citizens are picking their way through a ſea of mud. This forenoon ſummer was proclaimed in the ſkies, while yet the head of the gulph of Finland betwixt Peterſburg and Cronſtadt is a field of ice, and for many leagues into the ocean: loud peals of thunder rent the clouds. Alas! the approach of ſummer

proclaims likewiſe the approach of war. The ſtreets are daily crowded with troops marching to the frontiers of Sweden. The temple of Janus is opened. I heard from my window the trumpet's ſhrill ſound: I went out and followed the regiments, and mixed with the crowd attending them. "May you conquer our enemies, and re-"turn victorious and unhurt!" ſaid a poor peaſant to a ſoldier; and, while he ſpoke, the tears guſhed from his eyes. The ſoldier ſtepped aſide and kiſſed him. The inhabitants look wiſhfully at thoſe going to fight for them. The ſoldiers ſeem pleaſed with this mark of tender concern, and graſp their muſkets firmer in their hands.

Several thouſand Tartars, Baſkeers, and Kirgees are arrived and encamped near the city. They are all horſemen: poor miſerable looking creatures, eſpecially the Kirgees. They reſemble a band of gypſies, and their encampment keeps up the reſemblance. Their tents are of poles covered with rags; and in addition to theſe, a few ruinous huts. Their arms are bows and ar-

rows

rows and a kind of ſpear; a piece of ſtick with an iron ſpike or nail at the end of it. Their horſes are very ſmall but ſpirited animals, continually fighting with one another. The horſe furniture is a wooden ſaddle ſoftened with rags, a very uſeful article in a Tartar equipage; and a bridle made of a leather thong or bit of rope of a ſimple conſtruction. But as the Tartars ſpeak to their horſes, they have the leſs occaſion for ſpurs or bridles. The Tartars obſerve no kind of order in camps, and very little in their march: they have no uniform, though a blueiſh colour is the prevailing faſhion among them. The faſhion of their coat differs not much from the Ruſſian, but it is ſhorter and with open ſleeves; over which the officers wear a long robe of ſcarlet or other gaudy colour, ornamented with narrow gold lace, or embroidered more or leſs according to their dignity. Their caps are of ſkins, with long flaps hanging about their necks and ears. The common men are ſo ragged and dirty, that one is at a loſs to deſcribe their habiliments. Their face is ſhort and

and rather oval, with high cheek bones, aquiline noſes, ſmall lively eyes, tawny complexions, and low ſtature. They are very awkward in their gait in walking, but quite at home upon horſe-back; and they delight in inclining their bodies to one or other ſide of the horſe, to ſhew how eaſily they can recover themſelves. They frequently practiſe ſhooting at marks, and ſeem to have no ideas but ſuch as relate to their horſes and their quivers. The officers have piſtols and ſabres richly ornamented with ſilver and gold. The armour of their men is very mean; they have all of them ſabres, but are ill enough provided with muſkets, with and without locks. They are not fond of fighting with or againſt muſketry: what work they do in battle is done quickly, and loading takes up time: they beat or are beaten in a moment. I am at a loſs to gueſs what ſervice they can be of in Finland, whoſe rocks and mountains, ſo unlike the plains of Tartary, will be another world to thoſe tribes, and overturn all their ſchemes of war. They may, indeed, butcher the defenceleſs peaſants; but

I hope this diſgrace will not happen to the Ruſſian arms. The ſtricteſt regard to the laws of war can alone alleviate its horrors, or adorn its triumphs. No ſituation, no provocation, no neceſſity will apologize for cruelty. Would a monument hung round with human heads, like the gates of the kings of Perſia and Dahomy, who drench every paſſion in the blood of their ſubject ſlaves, tranſmit a hero's name with honour to poſterity? Such might have been erected for Montcalm at Quebec. The order or permiſſion of that accompliſhed and intrepid commander to the ſavage allies of France, to commit wanton acts of barbarity, tarniſhes the crown of glory that otherwiſe would have been his due: and even the ſacred name of Wolfe is ſullied by permitting retaliation.

I lament the war of Sweden with Ruſſia, and earneſtly pray for a ſpeedy termination of it. With regard to the Turks, the enemies of the Chriſtian name, I could wiſh to ſee them diſmiſſed from Europe. Notwithſtanding the follies and vices of Rome, I

cannot patiently behold the murderers of the Greeks and Romans. If Greece and Rome gave us the firſt models of laws, religion, arts, and ſciences, is it grateful in us to ſuffer, and even to protect, a monument of their diſgrace? Would it be cruel to ſend the Ottomans to inhabit the fertile plains of Aſia Minor, now deſerts for want of culture? Would it be illiberal to ſeparate the Greeks and Turks, to prevent thereby the daily torments endured by the deſcendants of the Athenians? to abridge the empire, and to ſhorten the reign of barbariſm? The ancient connection of Moſcovy with Greece, through the intermarriages of their ſovereigns, points out the Imperial Houſe of Ruſſia as the legal heirs to Turkey in Europe.

I do not conceive that a junction of the Turkiſh and Ruſſian empires would be favourable to the general balance of power, or to individual intereſts. But, perhaps, were the Grecian crown placed upon the head of a younger branch of the Houſe of Peter the Firſt, it might preſerve the political balance

of power, much better than to ſuffer the Turks to remain, to be played off, at the pleaſure of intriguing politicians, againſt the repoſe of Europe. There would be no danger from the family compact of Greece and Ruſſia, unleſs it could be proved that the Houſes of Bourbon and of Holſtein have increaſed their power by their family connections. The hiſtory of nations, as well as that of individual families, abundantly proves, that oppoſition of intereſt and mutual jealouſies are able to divide brothers and couſins juſt as eaſily as any other neighbours. There cannot happen a more favourable period than the preſent to give Greece a king and liberty, and to preſerve thoſe few relics of her former ſplendour which ſtill remain. To raiſe Greece again from her aſhes, and to make her again the ſeat of learning and of elegance, would do more honour to the powers of Europe, and to humanity, than all their political balance ſchemes and intrigues; which as yet have only ſerved to make mankind more wretched: their cabinets have been the nurſeries of war and legal murder.

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On this ſubject it may be further obſerved, that the Tartarian hordes have for ages continued to diſturb Europe, and ſtill continue to do ſo. The preſent war in Europe is occaſioned by diſputes of which they are the foundation. After having themſelves ceaſed to be a terror to European powers, bloody ſtrife ſtill ſubſiſts relating to thoſe vagabonds, altogether degenerated from their former character; which, though fierce, was diſtinguiſhed by many noble and manly virtues. It throws unſpeakable diſgrace upon Europeans, to permit the Tartars and Saracens of Aſia and Africa ſtill to diſturb their repoſe: and what adds to this diſgrace, Europeans keenly engage in quarrels with one another, while they not only put up with every indignity from inſolent barbarians, but even take a ſide againſt thoſe European powers who have the ſpirit to attempt their extirpation.

LETTER X.

Former State of Ruſſia.—Of the Tartar Nations.—Of the Conqueſt of China by the Tartars.

St. Peterſburg, April 1789.

THE Ruſſians, not many years ago, were in the ſame ſtate in which the Tartars now are; and even after they ſettled in the country of Moſcovy they continued under bondage to the Tartar nations, who ſurrounded them on all ſides. The Czar Ivan Vaſilivitſch I. releaſed his people from this degrading ſituation, and his ſucceſſor Vaſilivitſch II. effectually rooted out thoſe free-booters, and overawed them in their turn. From this period the Ruſſian monarchs extended their conqueſts; and, by a rapid progreſs, the vaſt regions from the banks of the Nieper to Kamſchatka, which views from its ſhores the American mountains, a ſpace of four thouſand miles, acknowledged their ſceptre.

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The moſt northerly parts of Siberia are inhabited by Fins and Tartar tribes in the loweſt ſtate of civilization; the ſouthern provinces border upon Tartary, properly ſo called.

There are many of the Tartars ſtill independent, if we call by that name the liberty of running from the protection of one ſovereign to that of another. The Ruſſian Government gives them every encouragement to ſettle in Siberia, and in the kingdoms of Caſan and Aſtrakan; and the Tartars begin to ſhew a diſpoſition to become huſbandmen. The Kalmuc hordes are the moſt obſtinate: they dwell near the Wolga, and maintain themſelves by fiſhing and with their flocks and herds. They refuſe the name of Tartars, becauſe the word ſignifies a vagrant.

The Kalmucs are eſteemed by the other tribes as a ſuperior claſs; the Kirgees are much inferior in character as well as in wealth: yet I could not help looking with veneration upon our Scythian fathers, though in rags. The Kalmucs deny them. The Kirgees, Baſkeers, and other Tartars,

deny the Fins; the Fins deteſt the Laplanders; and the Laplanders, buried in their earthen caves, eſteem themſelves of divine origin. This is the beſt ridicule of family pride and connections that I have met with.

The Fins are quiet and induſtrious, and conſequently ſuperior in ſome reſpects to all the others. "But," ſay the Kalmucs, "they are farmers—they till the ground; "they are clowns: we are huntſmen and "warriors, the immediate deſcendants of "Zinghis Khan and Tamerlane, conquer-"ors of India and China*!"

The Tartars are, at this day, divided into four grand diviſions: the firſt inhabit their native plains of Tartary, under their khans; the ſecond are mixed with the Chineſe, under the ſame government and laws; the third, having ſubmitted to the

* The Indian nations in America admit the ſuperiority of the Europeans in arts and ſciences and all kinds of refinement, but they deſpiſe them for ſubmitting to induſtrious labour: in like manner the antient Caledonians, inhabitants of the mountainous regions, and addicted to hunting and predatory war, by way of contempt called the Low Country Scots *peighs*, or *labourers*.

government

government of Ruſſia or to its protection, dwell in Siberia and upon the banks of the Wolga; the fourth acknowledge the Sultan of Conſtantinople for their chief, and pitch their tents in Little Tartary: the laſt of theſe diviſions arrived, under the command of a deſcendant of Zinghis Khan, at the time the Crimea was in the poſſeſſion of the Genoeſe, whom they drove out by the aſſiſtance of the Turks: hence the alliance between theſe two hordes. The Turks conſider the Tartars as ſlaves; and their princes of the Houſe of Ghyri-a-Gheary, their firſt leader, receive an annual ſubſidy from the Porte, upon condition of appearing in the field with an army in the Turkiſh wars. The Turks depoſe their princes at pleaſure; but they appoint a khan always from among the relations of the Ghyrian race. Thoſe people have partly changed maſters ſince the conqueſt of the Crimea by the Ruſſians; but they are ſtill attached to their old lords from habit and ſimilarity of religion; and many have deſerted to the Turkiſh provinces adjacent.

Emigrations from the mother country at various

various periods filled the country adjoining. The new ſettlers, following the example of the Crimeans, adopted in part the Mahomedan religion, and became allies of the Porte. The Moguls, or Kalmucs, ſettling upon the eaſt of the Wolga, were entirely ſeparated from their brethren in Little Tartary. The Czars of Moſcovy permitted them to live in their own way, only upon condition of remaining quiet, and paying a trifling tax in their lamb-ſkins; which are famous and univerſally worn in Ruſſia. As the Kalmucs, notwithſtanding thoſe gentle terms, were much addicted to lawleſs diſorder and plunder, the Czars were more than once obliged to curb their inſolence and depredations. They could claim a ſuperiority to the Crim Tartars but in one point—their ſteady adherence to the religion of the Lama; both purſued the vocations of hunting and robbing. The Crimeans were diſtinguiſhed by the name of Mahomedan Tartars, and conſidered as apoſtates.

Mountainous countries are ſaid to be moſt favourable to liberty; and yet the Tartars

tars in their wide plains boaſt of freedom; their emigrations, to ſeek the protection of foreign monarchs, however, prove that they have got tyrants at home; who, no doubt, contend in arms with one another: in conſequence of which, the defeated are happy to find an aſylum in other countries. The freedom of unpoliſhed nations, indeed, conſiſts merely in lawleſs plunder and diſputes. When a wandering nation is prevailed upon to ſettle, and to ſubmit to the laws of their prince; he ill deſerves the name of tyrant, who endeavours by laws, by commerce, and by other means, to reform his ſubjects, even in ſpite of themſelves, and make them capable of liberty.

None but the ſpeculative enthuſiaſt will ever brand the name of Peter I. nor of any prince who purſues meaſures ſimilar to his, with the name of tyrant. There cannot be a ſtronger proof of a monarch's wiſhing his people to be free, than that of his taking every ſtep to render them capable and worthy of freedom. The Kitan or Kathan Tartars were the firſt conquerors of China,

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and gave their name to it, Cathay; by which name it is ſtill known to the Tartars and Ruſſians; who call too the ſtuff Nankin, the famous manufacture of China, Catayka. Theſe firſt conquerors, in conjunction with the original natives, built the celebrated wall, to keep out the numerous ſwarms that crowded after the Kitans to their good fortune. The Kitans and Chineſe were, however, overpowered ſucceſſively by the Mogul and Tonguſian Tartars. It is a prince of the laſt horde that now ſits upon the Chineſe throne.

The ruin of the Chineſe empire would have naturally followed its conqueſt by the different nations of Tartars, had the Tartars then been the barbarous race they now are; and a ſecond Rome have tumbled before the Goths of Scythia. The Romans, unable to ſave themſelves, ſaved China. In their expeditions into Tartary, they left behind them a taſte for the fine arts; and, no doubt, many ſtragglers of their legions. The Tartars had, beſides, in their wars with India, procured a taſte for induſtry as well as plunder;

plunder; and monuments of ancient grandeur, the remains of noble cities and other works, inconteſtably prove that Tartary was formerly the ſeat of elegance and arts. Thoſe tribes who boaſt their reſemblance to the ancient Moguls by their preſent vagrant life, expoſe their ignorance and degeneracy.

It would appear that China had drawn into it all the enterpriſing and induſtrious Tartars, for thoſe left behind fell off from the reputation of their forefathers; or elſe the ſucceſs of one tribe in the conqueſt of that country, raiſed a ſimilar ſpirit in their brethren at home; which, however, ſubſided at laſt after many conflicts among themſelves, in ſubjection to one or other of the great powers around them. That part of Tartary which ſent China her preſent lords is under the ſame laws, and its natives ſtill acknowledge the Emperor of China for their khan: they have ſeveral times attempted, with the aſſiſtance of the Chineſe, to ſubjugate other kingdoms in Tartary, but have been repeatedly driven back by ſome brave

brave and numerous hordes, which yet remain to defend the tombs of their anceſtors. The Moguls and Tonguſians, when they paſſed the great wall, were not one hundredth part ſo numerous as the Chineſe: a civil war among themſelves gave an opportunity of attack to a few daring invaders. By adopting the dreſs and manners of the vanquiſhed, they prevented them from ſeeing this inferiority of numbers. The Tartar language, alſo, bearing a near affinity to the Chineſe, the conquered could not diſtinguiſh, in the armies of the uſurpers, who were Tartars, or who their countrymen; nor know, of courſe, with what probability of ſucceſs they might be attacked.

China may be conſidered as a province of Tartary. It has certainly, from the earlieſt period of time, been peopled by refugees from this mother country, flying from tyranny and oppreſſion. The mountains afforded them protection, and the delightful climate and rich ſoil eaſily invited thoſe who had fled from war to arts of peace: it was probably owing, in like manner, to defeat

and oppreſſion, that colonies were driven into China by ſea from Egypt. The Tartars poured forth on their neighbours in every direction, and carried their victorious arms and made conqueſts in India, Greece, Italy, Germany, France: in a word, in every quarter in Aſia and Europe; nay, even in Africa. A great deal has of late years been written, and not a little of this by men of real genius and learning, on the ſubject of Tartary; among whom Mr. Bailli and Mr. Pallas are particularly diſtinguiſhed. There are monuments, both natural and artificial, that carry the philoſopher, who ſurveys that wide zone of the earth, back to the remoteſt antiquity—periods antecedent to written records, and even to oral tradition. Tartary has probably, and indeed without any doubt, undergone many viciſſitudes as well as other countries, particularly champaign countries of great fertility and extent. The Etruſcans were a civilized people in Italy before the Romans: and other nations, in that fine country, were, no doubt, in civilization and knowledge prior to the Etruſcans.

Etrufcans. The irruptions of thofe multitudes that, iffuing from the Tartarian plains, over-ran nations far and near, did not, however, take place in any period of refinement; but in a period when tribes and nations are moft warlike, and moft difpofed to move from their own territories, and to invade thofe of others: when they have, indeed, like the ancient Germans, begun to cultivate the ground, and raife provifions for an army; but, when they retain that difpofition and habit of moving from place to place, which is natural to men who have not laid afide thofe of hunters and fhepherds. In many things they were barbarians, but not in the art of war: fo that what was faid by the Roman General of the Gauls and Germans, I think, was applicable equally at leaft to the Tartars and Scythians: "Thofe "barbarians have nothing barbarous in their "difcipline."

The revolution in the affairs of men, that was occafioned by that deluge of barbarians, is mentioned by the Greek and Roman writers only incidentally: but the fources and

and firſt migrations of thoſe people lay beyond the northern hiſtoric horizon of the antients: which horizon was bounded by the 57th degree of northern latitude. The northern coaſts of Europe to the north-eaſt of the Elbe were not at all known: the extenſive ſea was very little if at all navigated. There was no certainty about the Caſpian, which was ſuppoſed to be a great bay of the Northern Ocean; as was alſo the Euxine. The Scythian clans of the Roxolani, dwelling on the north of the vale of Boryſthenes, were the moſt northerly people known to the antients; for, the regions beyond them, although in a parallel more to the ſouth than many parts of Britain which were known to be inhabited, were ſuppoſed to be uninhabitable on account of the extreme cold: this was the northern boundary of the geographic knowledge of the antients. All beyond was unknown, and ſuppoſed to be a region of inhoſpitable cold and darkneſs. The more remote antients, as Homer and Heſiod, in conformity with the popular notions of their times and country,

ſuppoſe all thoſe beyond thoſe precincts to be beyond the bounds of the earth; nay, beyond chaos, to be the region of ſhades, and ſubterranean. This region, however, they called *Tartarus*, by the name of a people and country that really exiſted. This unknown land, deſcribed as beyond the extreme bounds of the habitable world; and even beneath the earth, was the fabulous habitation of the Cymri; Cimmiari or Cimbri of the early ages, a people known to the antients only in fable.

The Greek and Roman writers then were unable to explore or even to form any plauſible conjecture concerning the origin or firſt courſes of thoſe barbarous people: and their migration, and inundation of the countries all around, has been generally conſidered as a ſubject of wonder and aſtoniſhment rather than an object of philoſophical inveſtigation.

In the preſent age of rational curioſity and enquiry, it may be expected that men of leiſure, genius, and learning, will collect all the facts, and the fragments of facts, relating

relating to that deluge of barbarians, that lie ſcattered amidſt the maſs of hiſtoric ruins, and try to recompoſe them into ſome ſemblance, at leaſt, of their original exiſtence. The philoſophical enquirer will not view thoſe hordes upon hordes as dropping from the clouds, like ſwarms of inſects; or, as birds of paſſage flying through the air. He will be attracted by their capacity of moving, and the means of ſupporting and enabling them to move in a body. He will not give way to the ſuggeſtions of an indolent preſumption, that thoſe people were mere ſavages, or reſolve all their movements and operations into mere brutal force. He will immediately perceive military diſcipline and ſubordination; a regular ſyſtem of march and caſtrametation; and an effective plan for the ſupply of proviſions and warlike ſtores, with the neceſſary means of carriage. At the head of thoſe tribes, or hordes, he will find leaders of ſpirit and vigour of mind ſufficient to command the reſpect and obedience of their ferocious officers and ſoldiers; and of ſuch military experience and ſkill, as

well as fortitude and bravery, as to meet in the field the beſt generals in the civilized world; and finally to conduct their command, through an infinite variety of unforeſeen occurrences and emergencies, to the deſtined point of ſervice.

LET-

LETTER XI.

Finniſh Nations.—Error of Mr. Buffon.—Cuſtoms and Manners of the Tartar Nations.—Of the Religion of barbarous Nations.—Similarity of Cuſtoms between the Tartars and American Indians.

St. Peterſburg, April 1789.

THE Finniſh nations in Europe are thoſe inhabiting Finmark and the provinces bordering upon the gulph of Finland. They are different from the other tribes inhabiting the more northern parts of Europe and Aſia, in language and religion. Their manners have a nearer reſemblance, as muſt happen to tribes and nations, whether they be of the ſame origin or not, dwelling in the ſame climate, and under the ſame circumſtances. Difference of language is not always, however, a certain proof of a dif-

 ferent

ferent origin; nor, on the contrary, is ſimilarity of cuſtoms a proof of the ſame original. "We find in Lapland," ſays Mr. Buffon*, "and in the northern parts "of Tartary, a race of ſmall-ſized men, "whoſe figure is uncouth, and whoſe "phyſiognomy is as wild as their manners are unpoliſhed: though they ſeem "to be of a degenerate ſpecies, they are numerous, and the countries they occupy "extenſive. The Laplanders, the Danes, "the Swedes, the Moſcovites, the inhabitants of Nova Zembla, the Borandians, the "Samoeids, the Oſtiacs of the old continent, "the Greenlanders, and the ſavages to the "north, to the Eſquimeaux Indians of the "new continent, appear to be one common race, which has been extended and "multiplied along the coaſts of the northern ſeas, and over deſerts conſidered as uninhabitable by every other nation." This hypotheſis Mr. Buffon attempts to ſupport by ſimilarity of ſize and features; but this reſemblance is merely ideal. The Ruſſians,

* Hiſtoire Nat.

Swedes, and Danes are as unlike the natives beyond the arctic circle, as the other inhabitants of Europe. They are, in general, tall, well made, and comely, and as different in language and cuftoms as any two people poffibly can be, except in one inftance; wearing fur cloaks in winter.

The Afiatic tribes inhabiting Siberia and the banks of the Wolga are divided into Fins and Tartars. The latter prevail in number. The Laplanders, with the Greenlanders, Fins, and other tribes upon the Frozen Ocean, were, without doubt, the original inhabitants of Ruffia, Denmark, and Sweden, and had been driven out by the anceftors of the prefent poffeffors; a matter which is confirmed in a certain degree by the traditions of Lapland. The Ruffians call the firft numerical figure Odin, probably in allufion to the firft in place and dignity, as this celebrated leader was of the northern hives. The native country of Odin was Scandinavia. As we approach the pole, or enter the diftant plains of Tartary, he is lefs known. In Tartary he was

only chief of a wandering tribe. In Scandinavia he was the Sovereign and God of fixed nations. We find the Laplanders and Tartars in particular having other gods than Odin: they worſhip the ſun, in which, however, they ſuppoſe the exiſtence of a divine being. The Aſiatic Fins and Tartars offer to this luminary annual ſacrifices; in ſpring, to ſupplicate a plenteous harveſt: and in autumn, or winter, to return thanks for it, they offer the fruits of the earth. The Oſtiac Tartars have ſome ſimple inſtruments of muſic among them, and ſome ſimple tunes: they add to theſe ſome extemporary ſongs, and, when inſpired with the bottle, extemporary verſes. They have pantomime dances: the dancer puts on a maſk, and changes his dreſs, as he would imitate different men, beaſts, and birds. In thoſe Tartarian maſks it is eaſy to diſcover the origin of our maſquerades, and our Scythian extraction. Theſe cuſtoms are common to many tribes, and in their dances the women affect the moſt amorous geſtures; in which particular there is a reſemblance

between

between them and the Ruſſian females, as there is between both and the balladieres, or dancing girls, in India. Their manner of dancing is exactly the ſame as that of the women of the iſlands of the Indian Ocean, repreſented in the plates of Captain Cook's Voyage.

Beſides the ſun, the Tartars have various inferior deities, preſiding over vegetation, over harveſt and hunting; and every family too, and every foreſt, and river, and lake, has its peculiar god. The lower man is ſunk in ignorance, the greater is his fear; he multiplies his gods, as a kind of body-guards, againſt the equal number of evil genii which his fertile imagination creates along with them. He cannot conceive how one deity is able to extend attention and protection to all animate and inanimate ſubſtance. Even in our moſt exalted ſtate of knowledge, it is almoſt too great a weight for the human mind to conceive the vaſtneſs of a power, which of itſelf created and regulates all things. As our minds enlarge, the fictitious gods are baniſhed; the lakes,

lakes, the woods, and firm land, and floating ſeas, are as it were delivered into the hands of one almighty Governor!

In the ſacrifice for obtaining plenty of food, the women are permitted to join; but in no other ſacrifice. Many tribes, who deny the female title to future exiſtence, imagine it is unneceſſary in the ladies to ſolicit the gods unleſs for preſent ſubſiſtence. The Tartars open a furrow in the ſpring with great ceremony; and in this they are imitated by their deſcendant, the Emperor of China. If the harveſt fail, they ſay it is owing to the Chriſtian part of their countrymen, who offer no ſacrifices. They have a grand feſtival in honour of all the gods, and make their offerings before fires, as at an altar. They throw cold water upon the victim; and if it does not ſhiver at the ſeventh ablution, it is deemed an unfortunate omen. The prieſts, when the victim is dreſſed, hold up a diſh with part of the animal to the gods, and then divide the reſt among the votaries, as was alſo cuſtomary both among the Greeks and Romans. Parents,

rents, and age, over all the eaſt, are highly venerated. In the aſſemblies, in which matters of war and hunting are debated, the old men are firſt heard. The North American Indians preſent the moſt ſtriking pictures of filial love, or rather of filial adoration, in the annual reſurrection of their dead relations. The Aſiatics do not carry their reſpect to ſo awful a degree; yet they tranſport the bodies of their dead to a vaſt diſtance, to be interred near their other relations, if they happen to die in the country of ſtrangers; and they have annual feſtivals in commemoration of the dead. The Tartars in general are very pious and ſincere in their devotions: every one holds a roſary in his hand, by which they mark the number of their ablutions. The prieſt ſits croſs-legged upon his heels, facing the congregation; he recites the prayers in a ſoft and pathetic tone of voice, and the aſſembly repeat them, or anſwer Amen to each. The prayers of ſuch tribes as are of the Mahomedan religion are in the Arabic language. When the word *Alla* is pronounced, every

one

one heaves a profound ſigh, ſtops his ears, ſhuts his eyes, covering his face with his hands, and bending it towards the ground, as if unworthy to hear the ſacred name pronounced, or to look up to heaven. The Tartars wiſh to be interred near the tombs of reputed ſaints, as well as their relations, carrying their affections and their zeal to the grave. If the weather be hot, and the diſtance of theſe ſepulchres conſiderable, the dead body is reduced to a ſkeleton, which is tranſported to the deſtined place; while they bury the other parts where death firſt arreſted them. When a Tartar, in travelling, chances to ride by the tomb of his friend, he enters into converſation with the dead, enquires into his preſent condition, and, ſnatching a handful of hair from his horſe's mane, depoſits it upon the tomb. The Americans reſemble the Tartars in every thing regarding veneration for the dead, and funeral obſequies. They place the dead body upon a cloth, preſenting it with different viands and fruits, put a pipe into its mouth, and converſe with it concerning the accident which occaſioned its death. They

aſk

aſk if his wife, or ſons, or daughters, had vexed and broken his heart; promiſing ſatisfaction upon the delinquents, and to perform annual honours to his manes. The Ruſſians have ſtill remaining among them cuſtoms ſimilar to theſe: and in ſeveral other cuſtoms of the Scythians, the ſimilarity between their manners and the Americans would ſeem to confirm the idea of America having been peopled from the north-eaſtern parts of Aſia.

The Tartars formerly, when richer than they are now, uſed to bury with the dead valuable articles of ſilver and gold: yet ſuch is their veneration for their anceſtors, it is ſtill held, as it always was, the higheſt ſacrilege to plunder the ſepulchres. The Ruſſians, leſs ſcrupulous, find great treaſures in digging the tombs in Siberia and Tartary. This proves the degeneracy of the Tartars more than any thing elſe: the permitting ſtrangers, I mean, to diſturb the ſhades of their fathers. But their antient ſpirit no longer exiſts; and even the Kalmuc will ſoon begin to put moſt value on things of this world.

LETTER XII.

The different Tartar Tribes.—Marriage Ceremonies.—A Tartar Divorce.—Trial for Adultery in Tartary.—Tartarian Gods and Goddeſſes.—Funeral Orations.—Anecdotes of the Circaſſians.—A Tartar Love Song.

St. Peterſburg, April 1789.

THE various nations of Tartars are not only jealous of their diſtinct origins, but of preſerving their race pure and unſullied from mixture, unleſs with the Moguls or Kalmucs, whom they eſteem the higheſt claſs. There are ſmall villages in Siberia, which contain a whole nation of thoſe unadulterated ſpecies, covered with rags and naſtineſs, and ſunk into the loweſt degree of ignorance. Sometimes theſe little nurſeries of empires are reduced to ten or

twenty families; and, no longer able to exist of themselves, they intermarry with the tribes among whom they dwell, if these happen to be of an inferior rank, as none others would admit of such alliances. Hence the language of the reduced tribe, as well as their peculiar manners and customs, in a short time become extinct. The Arinzes, a Tartar tribe inhabiting Siberia, reduced to a small number by war and misfortunes, fled and associated with the Katschinzes, taking wives among them. In the year 1735, when Messrs. Muller and Gmelin visited the Yenisei, there was only one man left who spoke the Arinzian language: Mr. Muller found this person useful in giving him words from his vocabulary, from a language nearly expiring. When Mr. Muller and his fellow-traveller Gmelin visited the same part in the year 1740, the Arinzian was dead; and the language of his nation, and the nation itself with him!

Whatever disputes may arise about the origin of men, the origin of women affords no grounds for any: it is perfectly distinct:

they

they are all of the ſame race and family—whether they tread bare-footed the deſerts of Tartary, or lead the dance in the gayeſt Pariſian aſſemblies, they ſhew themſelves to be of the ſame genuine ſtock in cuſtoms and manners. The Pariſian lady pillages every toy-ſhop to ornament her perſon: the Tartarian damſel, for the ſame end, is equally eager in exploring the ſhores of every lake, every hill, and plain, and wood: in order to ſet off her charms, ſhe picks up every pebble and ſhell: they all agree in one purſuit—man. Their language and oratory are the ſame: the ſame their eyes—their tears. They allow men to conquer Aſia, Africa, Europe, and America; and, when men have done, they lay hold of the victors.

Wives, among all thoſe northern and eaſtern nations, are purchaſed by the men: and ſo ſoon as a Tartar female is marriageable, the mother hangs a white ſheet upon the outſide of the tent, as a ſignal to bachelors. The parents in Tartary, as well as in Europe, keep to themſelves the privilege of making the bargain. The bride, as cuſtom demands,

demands, ſtruggles hard at leaving the family hut: the bridegroom requires aſſiſtance in dragging her away; as it would appear forward and ungrateful, to ſeem to go willingly from her parents and houſehold gods, and immodeſtly to ruſh into the arms of a ſtrange huſband. They at leaſt make a ſhew of

> . . . . innocence, and virgin modeſty,
> That would be woo'd, and not unſought be won.
>
> MILTON.

The bride is carried to bed by force. Among ſome tribes, they ſet her upon a mat, and, taking the corners, carry her into the bed-room, ſaying to the bridegroom, "Here, wolf, behold thy lamb!" But then comes the ordeal trial: if the bridegroom ſuſpects the virginity of the bride, he returns the wanton to her relations again; allowing, however, the purchaſe-money. Among the Oſtiacs the cuſtom varies: if the bridegroom be ſatisfied with his bride, he preſents, next morning, a rein-deer to his mother-in-law: but ſhould he not be ſatiſfied, the mother-in-law preſents a rein-deer

to the bridegroom; thereby juſtly and ingenuouſly implying, that, the daughter being under the mother's care, the praiſe or blame of her conduct belongs to her guardian. If a Tartar is determined no longer to bear with the frailties of his wife, he goes up to her, and tears off her cap or veil; and this, of itſelf, conſtitutes a divorce. The Tonguſian, when he has detected his wife in criminal connection with other men, challenges the adulterer; and being armed with large clubs, the challenger firſt receives ſeveral blows from the challenged upon his back; which is then returned alternately until one or the other is killed, and frequently both. If the adulterer refuſes the challenge, he muſt pay whatever is demanded by the injured huſband in cattle and goods.

The Tartars have their gods and goddeſſes in as great abundance as the Greeks and Romans, with other names, but with the ſame employments. Their Juno is called Youma Ava, or Mother of the Gods; her ſons are the inferior deities. Pan is chriſtened Vadaſch; and we find him at his old trade

trade of ſheep-herding. The men are under the protection of the gods—the women of the goddeſſes, whom they addreſs ſeparately. Unlike the antients, they beſtow the title of Thunderer upon an inferior deity; and, indeed, leave very few things for Jupiter to do, except to produce children. The Tartars have ſome furies too; but I have not found over whom they preſide, as the Tartar huſbands keep their wives in tolerable order with the help of a whip—a famous inſtrument in northern countries for making peace:—it is the olive-branch of Scythia.

Polygamy is permitted among the Tartars; yet it is only the wealthy who can indulge in this; the women chooſing, in general, to have a poor huſband to themſelves, rather than to be one of two or three to the richeſt chief. If a Tartar has not ſufficient money or goods to purchaſe a wife, he ſerves his father-in-law a certain number of years, as Jacob did of old; or, perhaps, he ſteals a wife from a ſtrange tribe. They prefer Kalmuc women to all others, alle-

ging, that they preſerve the marks of youth longer than thoſe of the common race of Tartars; and to procure ſuch alluring wives, they make incurſions into the Kalmuc countries, in order to carry the women off: the haughty Kalmuc would never conſent to ſuch marriages. Should a Tartar leave a Kalmuc widow, ſhe diſplays, in a funeral oration, the heroic tenderneſs of her huſband, who did not purchaſe her with vile cattle or money, but ventured his life to obtain her. She boaſts of his conjugal love, his generoſity, his wiſdom, his œconomy, and wealth; the number of cattle which he had ſtolen, and ſlaves which his valour had procured him. She pourtrays the noble figure he made upon horſeback, in the chaſe, and in battle.

The Tartars are not remarkable for the chaſteneſs of their character; yet we find examples, even among the Circaſſians, who make a trade of beauty, of reſpect to decency. Theſe, when under bondage to the Khan of Crimea, were obliged to furniſh his haram with a handſome young virgin an-

nually. The Khan ſent regularly his officers to demand this tribute to luſt. It happened that the officers uſing improper freedoms in examining the girls, were put to death by the enraged fathers and relations. They collected their forces, and cut in pieces the army of the Khan, which was ſent againſt them to revenge the murder of his miniſters.

From native poetry and ſongs the diſpoſition of a people is beſt determined; and, if we may judge of the amorous complexion of the Tartars from theirs, we ſhall think very highly of their tender feelings. The following is a female love-ſong, literally tranſlated from the Kalmuc language; the ſubject, the abſence of a lover.

As ever in the morning the larks exalt their voices,
And I liſten to their ſong,
So my beloved comes inceſſantly into my mind
Ah my father! excellent at ſhooting with the bow!
Ah my mother! of ſo kind a diſpoſition!
Muſt it then abide only in my thoughts?—
Thoughts are ever deceitful;
Senſual perceptions alone are real.
O my friend! let this be told to you—
The conjunctions of nature are powerful.

The approach of our fate is concealed :
Bliſs flies of itſelf unexpectedly,
And is deſtroy'd by the viciſſitudes of the courſe of
the world.

Thoſe Tartars who deny the right of women to a future ſtate, at the ſame time exempt them from all crimes here ; and they are ſubject to no laws but the reſtraint of their huſbands. Other tribes admit their ladies to accompany them to the other world—where, ſay they, good men will find their families, their cattle and property of various kinds, in a much better ſtate than in this.

According to their near or remote acquaintance with their Mahomedan brethren, their religion is more or leſs mixed with its tenets : and ſometimes the doctrines of the Lama and of Mahomet are ſo jumbled among the common race of Tartars, that it is difficult to ſay what they profeſs. They call their heaven the land of perfect perfection : their hell is a cold one ; where the poor wretch is doomed to wander, ſhivering, naked, and forlorn.

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LETTER XIII.

Cuſtoms and Manners of the Tartars.—Intereſting Anecdote of the Torgot Horde.—Specimens of Tartar Poetry, from the Ruſſian Travellers.—M. Pallas's Account of the Kalmucs.—Anecdotes of the Tonguſians, the beſt of all the Tartar Nations.—Politeneſs to their Women.

St. Peterſburg, May 1789.

THE Scythians, though ſhepherds, never reſembled, in the leaſt, the portraits drawn of Arcadian ſwains. Their crooks are ſpears; their mellow pipes are harſh-throated horns; and their hamlets are filled with bows and poiſoned arrows. They are butchers rather than ſhepherds: their flocks are fed for ſlaughter. Where there is agriculture there is proportionable peace and protection; but

there is not the like ſecurity and repoſe in the paſtoral life. However brave they may be, we ſhall find that nation moſt averſe to war, where agriculture and commerce flouriſh moſt. Where there is a fixed and great property, the poſſeſſors are not fond of running the chances of war, by which they may loſe, but cannot gain.

The Tartars are hoſpitable to ſtrangers. In their prayers they beg that God would beſtow plenty, to enable them to warm and comfort the traveller. When you have once procured their friendſhip by kind offices, they ſeldom betray any confidence put in them. To one another they are very kind in misfortune; parting with a ſhare of their wealth to reinſtate their countrymen in the condition from which they had fallen. Some writers apologiſe for their depredations, on the ground that they proceed from a falſe notion of bravery. When a band of Tartars, or, I ſhall ſay, a foraging party, have ſeized upon a herd of cattle, they make a feaſt, and what is not needed for preſent conſumption is ſent home. As they

they grow weary of the expedition they drop off, without aſking leave of any one. Their priſoners they make their ſlaves; as no Tartar, unleſs in the utmoſt neceſſity, will be a menial ſervant. The women diſcover, as every where elſe, a mild and humane diſpoſition; they are the priſoners' advocate with their fierce huſbands, and often connive at their eſcape at the hazard of their own lives. The Ruſſian government having found the Tartars rather fickle political friends, oblige them to give hoſtages; and it is common to ſee, in the ſtreets of Peterſburg, a Tartarian Prince who is ſecurity for his father's or his brother's ſubjects. If it be true that the Tartars are abject ſlaves to their own Princes, whom they almoſt adore, we are at a loſs to reconcile with this their love of freedom. It would ſeem, they are attached to their old cuſtoms, rather than to actual liberty; and when unreſtrained in hunting and robbing, they imagine themſelves free. Their ardent love of a wandering life is ſtrongly marked by the following occurrence.

The

The Torgots, a Mongolian horde, formerly inhabited the banks of the Wolga. The Tartarian horde to which they belonged, diſſolved at the death of their khan, Geldan Zeren, in the year 1746: part ſubmitted to China; part fled to the deſerts, to enjoy independence; and the remainder acknowledged Ruſſia for their protector, and pitched their tents near the Wolga. They had frequent diſputes with the various hordes already under the Ruſſian government, and were conſtantly endeavouring to ſubdue each other. Their dread of falling at laſt into the power of ſome of theſe, or of the Ruſſians, who were under the neceſſity of interfering, in order to keep their Wolgaic hordes in awe, made them conceive the deſign of marching back into Soongaria, their native country. Their prieſts, to accelerate their motions, foretold their bondage to the Ruſſians, who, they pretended, would oblige them to follow agriculture, and furniſh recruits for the imperial armies. Trembling at this idea, the whole body moved, in the beginning of the year 1770, towards the plains

plains of Soongaria. The ground was covered with ſnow, and they had a vaſt tract of country and many rivers to paſs in their journey; the hardſhips of which, and the attacks they experienced from the numberleſs Tartar nations in their way, reduced them more than one half before they arrived at their deſtination. In this ſtate they fell an eaſy victim to the Chineſe, who forced them to apply themſelves to huſbandry, and diſmiſſed their prieſts, whoſe counſels might ſoon again remove them.

Among thoſe who were detained by the Ruſſians, who purſued them and brought ſeveral thouſands of them back, we find a piece of poetry, the burthen of which is the flight of their brethren, and their melancholy ſituation in being divided:

" As when the heavens, in a night ſerene,
" The twinkling ſtars illuminate the ſcene,
" And gild the azure firmament on high,
" And fling their ſparkling glories thro' the ſky—
" 'Tis ſilence all! and peace and pleaſure reign;
" No cloud obſcures the air, no ſtorm the main.
" At once a ſolemn gloom draws o'er our head,
" Involving earth and heav'n in one dark ſhade.

" Such

" Such quick viciſſitudes of bliſs and woe
" Attend the curſed fates of men below.
" Our friends are fled! We ſolitary ſtay
" Where the deſerted Wolga finds his way;
" Where, too, the lovely Mazak's orphan ſtream.
" Ah, is it thus? or do I only dream?
" No, no! they're gone!—At leaſt, bid us adieu!
" And ſay, With broken hearts we part from you!
" Sad is the journey for your flocks and herds;
" Was it not better what we have preferr'd?
" Or ſhall we, Heav'n forbid! drag ſlav'ry's chains,
" While you, in freedom, ſcour your native plains?
" How lank, how lean will be the gen'rous horſe!
" The herds how crippled, with ſo long a courſe
" O'er rugged frozen hills and ſnowy dales!
" Fate bids it ſo; and fate o'er all prevails.
" Ah! comfort us with hope of your return!
" Muſt we from houſehold gods be ever torn?
" Muſt we for houſehold gods and you for ever mourn?"

" The Kalmucs," ſays M. Pallas, " are " more active than the other tribes. They " are a cunning people, but ſocial, and even " in temper, upon every occaſion; friendly " to their dependents, and faithful to their " princes; which is remarkable in ſuch " widely extended plains and in ſuch a vagrant people. Were it not owing to their " attachment to their native manners, they " would

" would not keep together. Their tents are " of felt, made of the wool of their ſheep; " and indeed ſo hairy, it is fit for nothing " elſe, but very fit for this; keeping out the " wind and rain, and being very portable. " They are carried by camels; which, how- " ever, do not thrive well in thoſe regions. " A common property among them is ten " cows and a bull; or ten mares and a ſtal- " lion: but they number ſometimes by hun- " dreds and thouſands. They uſe the bulls " for beaſts of burden, and keep many of " them, eſteeming one bull as valuable as " fifty cows. The lambs of their ſheep " ſupply furs for peliſſes or great winter " cloaks.

" When a Kalmuc horde intends to re- " move in ſearch of freſh paſture, which, in " ſummer, they are under the neceſſity of " doing every four, ſix, or eight days, peo- " ple are, in the firſt place, ſent out to recon- " noitre the beſt ſpot for pitching the tents " of the khan or prince; for the lama or " prieſts; and for the idols. Theſe begin " the march, and are followed by the whole

" troop,

" troop, each choosing what place they think
" best in the cavalcade. The camel that is
" loaded with the most precious furniture,
" is decorated with little bells; the rest
" march in a string, the one behind the
" other. The bulls with the less valuable
" burthens are driven on before. On
" those days, the girls dress themselves in
" their best apparel, not forgetting the art
" of painting, which is common to the Asi-
" atics: they have the charge, together with
" the boys, of leading the cattle; and, on
" the roads, they beguile the tediousness of
" the journey with their songs. Besides
" milk, the Kalmucs are fond of roots.
" They procure tea, though at a high price,
" from Russia, which they mix; or some-
" times substitute wild herbs entirely for
" this bewitching beverage. They can-
" not endure hot rooms, and are very
" healthy."

The Monguls, or Kalmucs—the Mand-shours, or Tongusians, are the two most distinguished tribes of all the Tartar nations. They both claim their descent from the conquer-

conquerors of China, and boaſt of native princes who have ſat, or ſtill are ſeated, upon the Chineſe throne. The Kalmucs, the nation of Tzingis Khan, were driven out of China A. D. 1368. They revenged their diſgrace upon the other Tartars, and deluged their native plains with blood in ſearch of new ſettlements. They have now little to diſtinguiſh them but their name. The Mandſhours, more fortunate, were called in by the Chineſe during a civil war; and the wooden horſe, once admitted within the walls, has kept its ſtation. The Kalmuc Monguls inhabit the countries ſituated upon the Wolga. The Mandſhours, at the other end of the earth, pitch their tents upon the banks of the Amur, and coaſts of the northern and eaſtern ocean. The Kalmucs, tired with unſucceſsful ſtruggles, ſubmitted to the protection of Ruſſia; and the tattered remnants of Tzingis Khan's hoſt craved leave to reſt under the wing of the Imperial eagle. The Tonguſians bravely defended themſelves againſt the firſt Ruſſians who ventured to attack them in their native

country; but they were at laſt vanquiſhed by the ſuperior diſcipline of their invaders. Though vanquiſhed, their ſpirit was the ſame, and breathing ſtill independence. They revolted when an opportunity offered, and murdered the Ruſſian tax-gatherers. It was not until the year 1657 that Ruſſia had obtained the peaceable government of a part of this generous tribe. The Kalmucs are chiefly diſtinguiſhed from the common race of Tartars, by their form of government, which is monarchical. Their attachment to their princes keeps up ſome order among them, and diſcipline. The other hordes chooſe among themſelves chiefs, according to their ideas of their abilities, paying, at the ſame time, due attention to the wealth of thoſe elected.

The Kalmuc dreſs nearly reſembles the Chineſe; no doubt from their long reſidence among that people. The country of the Kalmucs is moſt favourable to agriculture, being of a good ſoil and climate, and not incumbered with woods: yet, the breeding of cattle is their favourite employment,

ment, as it is attended with leſs manual labour, which they abominate, as derogatory to their high deſcent, rather than from any averſion to eat the produce of the lands, for they purchaſe meal and other articles from the Ruſſians. The Kalmucs I have ſeen at Peterſburg are of a middling ſize; and it inſtantly ſtrikes you upon ſight, that you had ſeen them before. Any perſon the leaſt converſant with the hiſtory of China, and who has ſeen the plates in the hiſtories of that country, will be at no loſs to know a Kalmuc wherever he meets him. Their head and face are broad and round, and they have ſmall eyes and noſes, with ſwarthy complexions. Their head is ſhaved, all but a ſmall lock at the top; and they wear a bell-faſhioned cap. The Tartar viſage runs through the whole. They have learnt, at Peterſburg, to get into chaiſes, where they cut a droll figure, when contraſted with the powdered courtier in his *vis-à-vis*. They have not learnt how many are proper to ſit in a chaiſe at a time, and pack together in crowds, reſembling a ring of bells. They

are ſaid not to be the moſt cleanly in their perſons: their idle way of life eaſily accounts for this. The Tartars who profeſs Mahomedaniſm, have at leaſt changed ſo far for the better, in learning to waſh themſelves. They are a lively, and ſeem naturally an ingenious people; but their lazy habits and vagrant life have naturally given them all the attendant vices. There are few inſtances of murder among the Kalmucs, which, as they are exceedingly irritable and revengeful, is attributed to their belief in ghoſts. Murder among the Tartars is puniſhed with death, and that inflicted by the hands of the deceaſed's relations. If, however, they cannot find the culprit, and their anger abates, they frequently accept a compenſation in money or cattle.

The Monguls have ſome relicts among them of their antient pre-eminence. They have ſchools for teaching their children not only the common parts of education, but likewiſe geography, hiſtory, aſtronomy, medicine, and theology: and they have written books

books of laws. Their code is very favourable to women, who are conſidered by them as incapable of any crime. Moſt of the Aſiatics eſteem the female ſex in no other light than as mere inſtruments of pleaſure, and as a kind of human dolls for men to play withal. Even thoſe Tartars who permit their ladies to accompany them to the other world, mean it only for their own pleaſure. They do not bring them before Rhadamanthus: their women, like their cattle, are only a part of their equipage on the journey.

The domeſtic animals of the Kalmucs are camels, horſes, cows, ſheep, and goats; they have neither ſwine nor poultry: their horſes, beſides the purpoſe of riding, ſerve them in all reſpects as cows: they are fond of mare's milk. Horſe's fleſh is a delicacy with them; ſo that upon any expedition they are in no danger of wanting food; as every Tartar leads one or two ſpare horſes: they need not waggons to convey their proviſions; they contrive to make their proviſions carry themſelves.

The fleetneſs of their horſes, in their frequent marches, gives them the preference to all other animals, with thoſe hordes: a man of quality is therefore known by his numerous ſtud; in ſome inſtances, as ſome will have it, to the number of four thouſand.

The camels are uſed for heavy burthens; and the great men likewiſe ride upon them in ordinary journeys, or when the tribes are removing to a new ſpot of land.

The women manage the œconomy within doors: the men look to every thing elſe. The exerciſes of the Kalmucs are manly, and conſiſt in ſhooting with the bow, and wreſtling. They are fond too of ſinging, but the performance is with the females. In addition to the ſpecimens of their ſongs already given, take the following: the ſubject is a lamentation for a dying lover.

THE MAID.

Thy reddiſh bay horſe
Falls languiſhingly on the banks of the river Sall!
Thou falleſt, courageous youth! thou that art mine;
To thee the moon will be a ſtedfaſt companion.

THE

THE DYING YOUTH.

The eagle's feather, that is ſtuck in my hair,
Take from me, and carry it to my friends:
Ah! when you deliver it, ſo do it, that their tender hearts
Be not ſmitten with anguiſh at hearing the doleful news:
And let them the golden lettered Schodba *
Order to be read for twelve long years for me.

The ſubjects of their ſongs are, in general, the fabulous ſtories of gigantic chivalry, heroic tales, and amorous ditties. Their muſical inſtruments are, the lute, the violin, and the pipe; they likewiſe amuſe themſelves with playing at cheſs and cards.

Funeral ceremonies are ſtrictly obſerved by all the Tartars. The moſt honourable manner of reducing the body to duſt, according to the notion of the Kalmucs, is that of burning. They have an idea too, that ſuch purification by fire procures admiſſion for the ſoul directly into paradiſe.

The Tonguſians are partly under the government of China, and partly under that of Ruſſia. Their character is a me-

* Schodba is a ſort of maſs for the dead, written in letters of gold.

dium betwixt the proud oſtentatious Kalmuc and the common tribes addicted to pilfering and other low vices. The Tongufian nation is divided into two claſſes—the ſhepherds and the huntſmen. Their rugged country affords good opportunity for the chaſe, and plenty of game to induce them to make hunting a buſineſs. The Kalmuc country is flat, and without wood; the Kalmucs, therefore, hunt but for amuſement, and that ſeldom. The Tonguſian huntſman conſiders the ſhepherd's life as effeminate, and unworthy of men; he ſtrings his bow, hangs his quiver at his back, and climbs the mountain's ſide, ſmiling at the folly of his leſs active countrymen, in depriving themſelves of that health and vigour which the purſuit cf the wolf and the bear gives to him. Few of the Tartar or northern nations are now diſtinguiſhed for their hardy manner of life.

The Tonguſian huntſman prides himſelf upon his ſobriety, as well as upon his athlet c exerciſes. He calls the ſhepherd luxurious, who indulges in drinking a ſpirit

drawn from ſour milk. The ſhepherds are more wealthy than the huntſmen, and more at eaſe. Eaſe and wealth have ever occaſioned luxury, and herewe ſee it in its infancy. The ſhepherds do not expoſe themſelves to cold like the huntſmen; but the huntſmen are warmer by exerciſe, than the others even with the aid of brandy; brandy, which is as dangerous a ſubſtitute for warmth or exerciſe, as opium for reſt. Scurvy, the common diſeaſe of northern climates, is not known among the Tonguſian huntſmen, until old age prevents them from undergoing their uſual fatigue: even their want of cleanlineſs does not bring this calamity, until their bodies and their minds are no longer kept in motion. Scurvy is the conſtant attendant of lazineſs and dirtineſs; and wherever it is found, the other two qualities are not far removed.

The Tonguſian huntſman, while he preſents the fineſt character to be found in Tartary, is an evidence againſt the impoſition of thoſe excuſes that are made for drunkenneſs: he retains health and ſtrength

of body to the lateſt period of his exiſtence; they deteſt every thing mean or diſhonourable; are as jealous of any reflection upon their good name as the moſt polite nations; and, like them, decide all diſputes of this nature by duel—ſhooting the one at the other with arrows. They formerly fought in preſence of the elders; but now the Ruſſian government has forbidden ſuch encounters, and the men of honour retire to ſettle their diſputes in other countries. Their noble families, too, are as high-mettled as any in Europe: the brothers are guardians of their ſiſter's reputation; and ſhould a lady of birth be imprudent, the lover muſt marry her, if of equal rank; if not, her brother ſhoots him without farther ceremony.

The women are treated with the greateſt reſpect and tenderneſs; and, in return, they are the moſt affectionate wives; ſo that, at the death of their huſbands, they are not to be prevented without difficulty from killing themſelves. The young women make a preſent to their intended huſbands of a dreſs,

as a ſpecimen of their ſewing. The women are the muſical performers upon all occaſions. The Ruſſian males contend in this art with the females; but as the Ruſſians are a brave people, we cannot conclude that muſic is an effeminate amuſement. Nature would ſeem to have heſitated, whether to make the Ruſſians a nation of warriors, or nightingales; and, in heſitating, made them both.

LET-

LETTER XIV.

The Russian Amusements upon May-Day.—
The Approach of Summer.

Ingria, May 1789.

IN this country of Scythia, I imagine myself a thousand years old, and nearly related to Odin. I consider you as one of my posterity, and myself as writing to you from my tomb in the Desert of Tartary. I feel a crust of antiquity gathering round me: the wild scene of woods and uncultivated tracts presented to the view, keeps up the dream of ancient times. When I cast my eye towards Petersburg, the vision in part dissolves; but, as the country of witches is in the neighbourhood, a little farther stretch of imagination can make this emporium appear the effect of enchantment. It is with difficulty I can reconcile myself, after wandering

dering through Tartary, and ſtirring up the aſhes of gods and heroes, to recur to the common tales of travellers, and to inform you what the Ruſſians are now about.

This is May-day, and all the world are aſſembled at Catharineburg, and hailing with joy the return of ſummer, after a winter of ſix months. The earth, lately buried in ſnow, appears as riſing from the dead; the white covering, or winding-ſheet, is lying around in fragments; upon one hand I hear the ſinging of birds, upon the other the rending of the ice. The Gulph of Finland, upon whoſe ſhore Catharineburg is ſituated, is ſtill a frozen field. The Ruſſians are merry in the woods ſurrounding Catharineburg—drinking, ſinging, and ſmoking, in tents erected for this particular day. Every chaiſe and ſingle horſe chair is parading the ſtreets of Catharineburg. I regret much that the Ruſſians have no other place more proper than this, for celebrating ſo joyous an anniverſary: yet the empire is not limited by ſuch narrow boundaries—the adjacent country not ſo fertile or cultivated, as to forbid

bid the appropriation of a more extenſive and elegant place of public reſort. I deteſt extravagance in private works—I deteſt œconomy in public ones.

LET-

LETTER XV.

Russian Summer.—Anecdotes of Prince Nassau—of Paul Jones—Princess Daschkoff—Count Besborodko. — Russian Dances.—Russian Amusements in Summer.

Ingria, June 1789.

I HAVE retired from the bustle of the metropolis to the country. My hut is in the neighbourhood of the Russian and Finland villages—each rural sight, each rural sound. I go out every morning to fish in the river which runs through the woods; and I seldom dine without having a dish of my own providing at table: so much for industry. The Russian girls, who are gathering berries in the forests, entertain me with their songs; and in return I purchase their collection of wild fruits.

Winter has hardly diſappeared, when all the earth is dreſſed in her fineſt liveries: the fir-tree alone retains his garb at all ſeaſons, and keeps his ſhaggy coat in the cold weather, in common with the bear and wolf who dwell under his branches. The quick tranſition of the ſeaſon is moſt diſtinguiſhable in the birch foreſts: not many days ago they were naked and ſhivering; they are now new clothed in light green, and make a beautiful contraſt with the dark hue of the pine. Earth's verdant carpet is ſpread over every plain. There is neither hill, nor mountain, nor rock, nor cataract, to bring into my deſcription of the Ruſſian ſpring. The laſt winter was uncommonly ſevere, and it is ſucceeded by a ſummer extremely hot. The ſun-beams are moſt unſufferable: I plunge into the river to cool myſelf; but the Ruſſians do not follow my example, until they have parboiled their bodies in the vapour bath. This climate is a trying one for any conſtitution: the Ruſſians make it worſe by their ridiculous practices. The field of ice upon the Gulph only broke up a few

a few days ago, notwithſtanding the great heat from the middle of April laſt. The farmer was ploughing and ſowing, in his ſhirt, upon land, while winter ſtill bound the ocean in his ſight.

A new ſcene opens: the ſea is covered with ſhips: I hear the thunder of the Ruſſian fleet at Cronſtadt, whoſe harbour appears a wood of maſts. The village where I reſide in the country is ſituated about halfway between Peterſburg and Cronſtadt, and near the ſhore of the Gulph. I view the veſſels hourly paſſing and repaſſing, laden with the rich produce of the empire, or carrying to the capital the luxuries of other nations. No traveller, either going from or coming into Ruſſia, can paſs me unobſerved. I was here for a few days in April laſt, when Prince Naſſau arrived to take command of the galley fleet. He is a fine looking man, and has already approved himſelf, at leaſt, a brave officer. The inſtant of his arrival he ſent his ſervant to the poſt-maſter, to enquire if the report was true of Admiral Paul Jones being diſmiſſed

the

the Ruſſian ſervice. The Prince does not admire his late colleague in the Black Sea expedition: indeed, the newly created Admiral is univerſally deſpiſed, and muſt, of courſe, ſoon retire. I had the honour of ſeeing this hero lately: he dined at the poſt-houſe with his doxy, upon a trip of pleaſure from Peterſburg. He has nothing remarkable in his figure: I ſhould not have noticed him, had he not been pointed out to me. He did not know that the poſt-houſe and tavern was kept by an Engliſh-man. The Admiral ordered his dinner in bad French; he was anſwered in Engliſh, and he ſtarted backwards: "What," ſaid he to the maſter of the houſe, "you are an "Engliſhman! How did you know that I "was of that country?"

Prince Naſſau has a ſomething about him which immediately intereſts you. It is not neceſſary to be informed that he is a man of diſtinction. The Prince neglected to give his paſſport to the poſt-maſter. The poſt-maſter deſired the Prince's ſervant to aſk it from him, as he could not order

horſes

horſes for his carriage, however ſatisfied he was of his identity, and errand to Ruſſia, until he ſaw a regular paſſport for his entry. The ſervant replied, "That he had aſked "the Prince for it once, and that his maſter "would of himſelf deliver the paſſport "without being again put in mind of it; "which he would not again venture to do, "unleſs he wiſhed to have his head bro-"ken!"

We expect ſoon to hear of an engagement—the Ruſſian galley fleet with that of Sweden. The weather continues very hot. A captain of a Britiſh Eaſt India ſhip, who is juſt now travelling here, ſays, "That he "never felt himſelf more incommoded with "heat at Bengal, than he now does at Pe-"terſburg." It is even dangerous for ſtrangers to walk at mid-day, ſo powerful are the ſun's rays: the very woods have taken fire in ſome parts of Ingria. There has been no rain for ſeveral weeks: the graſs fields are burnt up, and the grain is ripening upon ſtraw not one foot in length. The river in which I fiſh, I am afraid, will be

dried up. In the evening at ſun-ſet, vaſt ſwarms of gnats, or muſquitoes, ariſe from the top of the foreſt, darkening the air. It is a proof of the extreme heat, when theſe inſects, hatched in the ſun-beams, dare not to venture out ſooner: they come at this late hour to ſip the dew, which then aſcends from the earth in a white miſt.

I go out in the morning at three and four o'clock to fiſh or to bathe: I am driven in again at ſix by the ſultry ſkies: I ſeek the ſhade, and exclaim with Virgil,

—O quis me gelidis in vallibus Hæmi
Siſtat, et ingenti ramorum protegat umbra!

This poet has given us a picture of a Scythian winter, but he forgot the Scythian ſummer. I put on my trowſers, and take my walk in the evening, in defiance of myriads of gnats. And I wander near the monaſtery of St. Sergius by the ſea-ſhore, while the laſt knell warns the monks to prayers and reſt: the nightingale ſerenades me with his ſong: perhaps a drunken Ruſſian, reeling along the road, diſturbs the ſweet Syren with his bellowing noiſe. The

bird

bird renews his note when the Hottentot has paſſed. A fine ſinger, or a fine orator, never preſſes you to hear them, and they only oblige you, if you attend in reſpectful ſilence.

I have my concert of vocal and inſtrumental muſic, at the poſt-houſe, every Sunday. A Ruſſian has made for himſelf a kind of harp; and his wife, Daphne, plays a little upon the guitar: but this guitar is cracked on the back, and moſt part of the muſic makes its eſcape the wrong way: however, the lady compenſates for this, by the excellence of her voice; ſuch as you have heard chanting the Babes of the Wood, or Chevy Chace. We had lately an aſſembly; two Finland girls performed a Ruſs dance, and trotted about to the great entertainment of the bearded ſpectators. All the Ruſſian dances are a kind of pantomime. The dancers are more ſtudious of the management of their eyes and hips than of their feet—they endeavour to convey the moſt wanton ideas. One of the girls acted the man's part, and threw very amorous glances

upon *his* miſtreſs; who, in her turn, bluſhed and languiſhed. The Coſſac dance was rehearſed by the houſe lackey and the parſon's ſon of the pariſh: this is a challenge dance; the one ſtrives to exceed the other in the execution of a variety of ſteps and leaps, which they perform alternately. The dancers, in all theſe dances, while they perform their different attitudes and ſteps, make the figure of a circle.

A few days ago, as I was attending the concert, Madam Shirbinin, daughter of the Princeſs Daſchkoff, entered the room, with ſeveral ladies and gentlemen. Madam Shirbinin ſpeaks Engliſh very well—ſhe has formerly been in England. This Princeſs would go a-fiſhing: I gave her my rod and lines. She was returning from Cronſtadt; where ſhe had been to take farewell of her huſband, who is gone with the galley fleet. Monſieur Shirbinin is a brigadier-general in the army. Several regiments have embarked with Prince Naſſau. His Excellency Count Beſborodko, Prime Miniſter of Ruſſia; with Prince Kourakin,

and other princes and nobles of the empire in company, dined here. The Count has raiſed himſelf to this eminent ſtation by real merit and ability; which are the only recommendations to Catharine II.

We are daily viſited from Peterſburg by the firſt ranks. I cannot get into or out of my room, without bruſhing againſt her Imperial Majeſty's Orders of St. George and St. Andrew; and have ſometimes the honour of playing at billiards with a Knez. The roads are crowded with the ſummer carriages of the gentry, called troſkys: they are of a more elegant conſtruction than thoſe uſed by the common people. A double row of ſeats is placed lengthways upon a low carriage with four wheels: over this is placed a canopy of ſilk or other ſtuff, with curtains to draw occaſionally, at the ſides and at the ends, in caſe of rain or duſt. This ſort of carriage is very convenient and light: it is eaſily drawn by two; but the Ruſſian gentry are fond of ſplendour, and they have generally four or ſix horſes to their carriages, with a correſponding num-

ber of livery-men. The company ſit in two rows, and with their backs to thoſe upon the oppoſite ſide ; but when there is room, the Ruſſian and German beauties recline themſelves in ſoft attitudes along the ſeats. They are fond of diſplaying their charms in the open air: the preſent dry ſeaſon collects the duſt around them—they look like angels in the clouds.

The country houſes of the nobility are placed cloſe upon the public road: their noble inhabitants entertain themſelves in tents erected under the trees, if there be any adjoining: here they drink their coffee, and the ladies employ their hours in needle-work or other amuſements. I obſerved female Turks attending upon theſe companies, and likewiſe riding with their new miſtreſſes in their carriages. The Ruſſian ladies treat them with great tenderneſs, and ſeem very fond of the daughters of Oczakow. Their gardens are in better taſte than their houſes: and, notwithſtanding the dead flatneſs of the land, nature is copied with much exactneſs. The nobility invite

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the public in ſummer to their gardens, where they are entertained with muſic, ſailing in boats upon the artificial lakes, fire-works, &c. in a magnificent manner. I was laſt Sunday in the gardens of his Excellency M. Nariſchin. There was an aſſemblage of the firſt rank, as well as of the lower orders, who gain admittance if decently clean in their apparel. The muſicians were diſpoſed in a grove of trees: the muſic had a fine effect, and ſeemed to aſcend from the earth. It adds nothing to the pleaſure derived from ſounds, to view the diſtorted features of the performers. An orcheſtra ſhould have a curtain drawn before it: the ſight of bag wigs, powdered tops, and crooked noſes, adds nothing to the pleaſure which we derive from muſic. If the performers muſt appear, let them be dreſſed ſomewhat more like the diſciples of Apollo. I cannot behold with any temper Handel taking ſnuff, ſcrewing his pins, or roſining his fiddle-ſtick: it gives the idea of a manufacture of muſic, as well as of tobacco. Theſe obſervations are not applicable to vo-

cal performers: a ſinger is an orator of harmony; and a good figure and geſture are requiſite in an orator. Any one who has ſeen and heard a beautiful woman ſing, will confeſs that the ſight gives new pleaſure to the hearing.

Amidſt the ſports of dance and ſong, I forget the bloody field of war—and I wiſh to forget it. The Ruſſians are following up their victories over the Turks, with heavier and heavier blows. The unfortunate war with Sweden is proſecuted with unequal ſucceſs on both ſides. The grand fleet and galley fleet are both at ſea, and we expect daily important intelligence. I will not entertain you with the vague accounts I may receive of battles and ſieges: have patience until I can with certainty give you a true and connected narrative.

LETTER XVI.

Character of Peter the Great.—Russian Nobility.—Reflections on Modern Luxury as it regards Commerce and Arts.—Picture of modern Russia.

Ingria, July 1789.

I TAKE my morning walk in the gardens of the palace of Strelina Myſa, now in ruins. Peter began this palace, and his daughter the Empreſs Elizabeth continued the building, but died before it was finiſhed. While I ſit upon a broken column, a thouſand thoughts ruſh into my mind. Peter meant to adorn the dreary ſhores of the Finland Gulph leading to his capital, with imperial manſions. The palaces of Oranienbaum, Peterhoff, and Strelina are evidently a part of this plan. The appearance of the oppoſite ſhore of Carelia, deſtitute of ſuch

ſuch ornaments, ſets off thoſe improvements in the light of contraſt. I can trace, upon the banks of the river where I fiſh, the outlines of gardens. Wherever I ſee a ſtraight avenue, I know that Peter has been there, and has cut ſome of the trees, formerly growing where I now walk, with his own hand. You may eaſily imagine that I feel myſelf a foot higher, in walking in a path which has been cleared for me by the hand of an Emperor! I am attached to Ruſſia and to Ruſſians—not from any ſuperior excellencein the natives—they are loaded with vices as much as any of their brothers of Europe—but becauſe they are the children of Peter I. As a proof of my friendſhip for them, I will tell them freely of their faults. Peter did every thing with the axe and the ſword—they were his only inſtruments in war and in peace: he fixed himſelf upon the throne with them; he conquered the fineſt provinces of Sweden; he built and peopled his metropolis; he built and manned his navy; he eſtabliſhed an academy of ſciences with thoſe tools, by ſeizing the

the library at Mittau—all this as a warrior and legiſlator. We wiſh we had not to add, that, unlike a father, he corrected his own children with them. In the academy there is a figure of Peter in wax: it would have been more characteriſtic in iron. There is, in the ſame collection, a bar of iron forged by his Majeſty's own hand. This is a better remembrancer of him:—yes, Peter! you manufactured other articles in the iron branch: racks, wheels, and impaling hooks, with ſtains upon them that time will not efface.

> No am'rous hero ever gave thee birth,
> Or ever tender goddeſs brought thee forth:
> Some rugged rock's hard entrails gave you form,
> And raging ſeas produc'd you in a ſtorm:
> A birth well ſuiting thy tempeſtuous kind,
> So rough thy manners————————

You ſee I can rail at my favourite prince: great actions ſhould not make us forget the cauſe of humanity; and however neceſſary his ſeverities might be, yet they were too inhuman a ſacrifice, even to procure the reformation

reformation of his people; which perhaps time might have accomplished without so high a price of blood.

Peter I. was anxious to make his native kingdom a great nation: he was rendered miserable by their opposition to his plans, their cabals and conspiracies against him; and in fits of despair, or rather of madness, he did things unbecoming his character. The works of this Prince were of a solid and lasting nature. If he oppressed his subjects, it was but for a time, and his object was, to bring them in the end peace and ease. The event would soon prove the sterling value of his plans, did the nobles and gentry attend to the improvement of agriculture, and cease to copy the extravagant follies of the rest of Europe; at least until their country be in the same state of improvement. The revenues of the Russian nobles and gentlemen as they now are, could support all their ancient grandeur: but were their incomes ten times greater than at present, they would not answer the demands of modern extravagance. The ancient robes,

covered

covered with gold and ſilver, were but one expence to a family for generations: they were delivered from the father to the ſon with the eſtate. An heir of theſe days would laugh at his father for ſuch a legacy. The monſter faſhion, created for a ſcourge to mankind, has occaſioned almoſt every evil that infects the age: inconſtancy in dreſs and diet has, beſides the daily and weekly renewing of expence, foſtered the ſame inconſtancy in our minds and actions. If the common people of Ruſſia would only part with their beards, I ſhould be happy to find them perſiſting in their ſimplicity of dreſs: nor have I much objection to the beard, if it were not an enemy to cleanlineſs. It is not ſo much Ruſſia that requires ſumptuary laws; all claſſes in other European nations are plunged in miſery by modern expences, which lay them open to conduct unworthy of men. Were the legiſlators of Europe to make ſumptuary laws, and enforce obedience to them, a greater reform would enſue than from any other laws whatever. Guſtavus III. of Sweden has ſhewn the worthy

worthy example: and his kingdoms will derive more advantage from thoſe ſumptuary laws, than from any war he can ever enter into.

Commercial nations will urge, that the conſumption of the various articles of faſhion employs a number of people: that changeability of faſhion, and love of diſtinction in ſociety, is the nurſe of arts, commerce, and all the improvements of life: this is ſo far true——and the nurſery too of improvements in modern crimes and vices. If extravagance and faſhion nouriſh crimes while they nouriſh commerce—if an equal number of people are rendered miſerable, to thoſe who are employed and maintained by them, might it not be prudent to check what is allowed, even by the advocates of faſhion, to be the origin of theſe evils? Might it not be prudent to look around us, and endeavour to find out ſome leſs dangerous ſupports for commerce, and for the people?

When agriculture has increaſed and arrived at ſuch perfection, that nothing more can be expected from it in regard to commerce;

merce; and when there are people whom agriculture and its productions cannot employ in ufeful and elegant manufactures; then, and then only, it might be proper to employ the people in manufactures of any kind which tend to this purpofe: but, until this period arrives, it is furely wrong to augment our commerce by luxury and vice, which at leaft fhould only be our laft refource. Let us firft try how far commerce can be augmented and fupported by induftry, which does not depend upon vice, before we adopt vices and luxury as the fole pillars of the induftry and profperity of mankind. Commerce fhould certainly be looked upon as in its zenith, when all the people are fully employed and comfortably provided for: thofe advocates for commerce who do not ftop here, will ftop no where. China holds up an illuftrious picture, how far agriculture, and the productions of agriculture, are capable of employing myriads of people, independent of foreign commerce. Let us improve upon this plan and example, and reject only fuch articles of foreign commerce

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as do not employ our own manufacturers: or let commerce and manufactures remain entirely free, and the vices and extravagances of the wealthy have full play as usual. I shall only propose one sumptuary law to prevent the private vices of the rich from infecting the public, by at first recommending, and gradually enforcing a *national dress*. I esteem dress the principal origin of luxury and vice. The higher ranks only can indulge in various other expences, but every class is ruined by the little ambition for dress—in every person's eye, and more or less in every person's reach. A national dress would soon be followed by numberless benefits. Many of the lower, and nearly all of the middling classes of the people would save one-fourth part of their present incomes: their families would be better maintained and more independent: fewer crimes would be committed. It is not so much against great crimes or expences we have to guard; mankind naturally of themselves shrink at both. There is an œconomy as well as innocence in nature. It is against those

thoſe deluding, eaſy ſteps that lead to luxury, to crimes, and ruin, that our attention ought to be directed. It is not ſo much againſt thoſe vices and luxuries which men commit and indulge in private, as againſt thoſe public follies that draw them imperceptibly to private exceſſes.

Our commerce will equally flouriſh, notwithſtanding this ſumptuary law, or at *worſt* be only lopped of ſome rotten, though gilded branches. Let our merchants and manufacturers import and export whatever they can find ſale for; and if they do not find ſale at laſt for ingenious uſeleſs commodities, they will be under the neceſſity of getting rich in a more reaſonable manner. Increaſed agriculture will increaſe population, which will find additional, though perhaps not new, employment to our merchants and manufacturers.

With reſpect to the fine arts, this ſumptuary law can in no way prevent their increaſing perfection; but on the contrary. I can neither agree, that private vices are public benefits, or that faſhion is the ſource

of rational improvement, ſince daily example ſhews us, that taſte, as well as virtue, is frequently excluded by faſhion. While the higher ranks of the nation exhauſt their fortunes for the benefit of many; that many becoming rich, become vicious likewiſe by the example of their employers. I will aſk, what arts have been improved by faſhion? Not architecture, nor painting, nor ſculpture, nor hiſtory, nor poetry; becauſe the profeſſors of thoſe arts are the moſt celebrated, who form themſelves on the model of the antients, aſſiſted by native taſte and genius. The arts which have improved under the patronage of faſhion, are, embroidering patterns for dreſs; the method of manufacturing cloth ſo as to ſtarve the wearers; hair powder, pomatums, waſhes, and innumerable other articles, which, no doubt, give employment to numbers. The manufactures of neceſſary articles might nearly employ an equal number of people, ſeeing that many unneceſſary manufactures are often ſubſtituted for the others. The remainder would find abundant

abundant employment in the cultivation of waſte lands, which are very extenſive even in the iſland of Britain. But as numbers have learned to lean upon our vices for a ſubſiſtence, no rapid change is recommended; let the people be gradually taught to lean upon our virtues.

Faſhion diverts the channel of wealth to the nurture of every frivolous art, and from the fruits of real induſtry and elegance. The profeſſors of the elegant arts find them the leaſt lucrative.

The enthuſiaſm ever attendant on genius keeps them in exiſtence, not the powerful patronage they experience. The wealth of individuals is devoted to riot and folly; the wealth of nations exhauſted by their princes, in ſchemes of wild ambition. Genius and arts find no encouragement, unleſs they proſtitute themſelves to pleaſe and flatter a vitiated race: and that they are now finding increaſed encouragement, is, I am afraid, no proof of their improvement, of the taſte of the age, or of the benefits derived from luxury or faſhion.

Modern nations have examples from the hiſtories of remote ages, and of mighty empires, what ſort of benefits were derived from private vices! Private vices multiplied by contagious example: all became vicious and effeminate, and their empires tumbled in ruins. From thoſe ruins, not only our architects and painters are taught, but the prince and the philoſopher.

I conſider Ruſſia as an immenſe landſcape, in the fore-ground of which appear the ſtatue of Peter the Great, and the living figure of Catharine II. Immediately around is that ſmall aſſembly of the nation, which their joint efforts have brought forwards into life, and to civilization. I am offended at their gaudy ſhew and decorations; they form a contraſt degrading to that multitude of peaſantry which I ſee behind them, among the woods, and upon the plains, clothed in the coarſeſt ſkins of beaſts, ignorant of arts and ſciences. Do the higher ranks wiſh to invite the mob to come forward, by that glitter of gold and ſilver upon their veſtments, the elegance of their carriages, and their

their ſuperb palaces? Do they wiſh the boors to quit the vices of ignorance, and adopt the vices of luxury in their place? Would it not be as well, if their Lords would ſhew them an example of induſtry and œconomy; and at firſt, by training a few peaſants upon their ſeveral eſtates, as farmers, ſpread the ardour for uſeful knowledge? It might be time enough too, when their revenues are increaſed by induſtry, to reap the fruits of it: and the fruits of induſtry are ſimple elegance; not vicious eaſe, nor the indulgence of vicious paſſions. Peter taught only the more vulgar, but more uſeful arts to a nation in the firſt ſtage of ſociety. It is not the beſt way to obtain a hearing of the great, to tell them of their faults; yet, if I had an opportunity of ſpeaking to her Imperial Majeſty, I would demonſtrate the ill conſequences of luxurious habits; and that it will require a longer ſtruggle to bring back the Nobility, than it will to bring forward the reſt of her ſubjects to the ſtate they ought to be in. The taſk of Peter I. was eaſy, in compariſon with what any attempts of the kings of many European na-

tions would be, to prevail with the higher ranks of the people to relinquiſh their effeminacy. To reform barbarians, is only to work in paſte rather hard; but to reform luxury, is to cure a leper. While Catharine II. is the patron of every ſolid improvement in arts, agriculture, and commerce, empty ſhow and idle magnificence are not checked.

I know, that not a little of what I have aſſerted in this letter will be controverted by the friends of luxury and refinement. I admit that it is luxury, or a love of pleaſure and diſtinction, that is the grand incitement to all induſtry: but, at the ſame time that our knowledge and our powers are increaſed by various exertions, our wants and deſires are increaſed alſo; and, unfortunately, our powers of reſtraint and ſupply do not advance in the ſame proportion: we may grow richer and wiſer without being happier.

LETTER XVII.

The Arrival of a Russian Regiment from Oczakow at Petersburg, under the Command of an English Officer.—Anecdotes of one of the Grand Dukes—of Princess Nassau—of Captain Bentinck, of the British Navy—of a Portuguese Colonel—of Lord Wycombe, Mr. Howard, and Mr. Whitworth.

Ingria, May 1789.

AT two o'clock this morning, while still silence reigned, or was disturbed only by the rustling of the leaves of trees, my ears were suddenly struck with martial music. As the public way leads by the river, on the banks of which I strayed with my fishing-rod, I soon perceived a regiment of soldiers upon their march to the capital. It has come from Oczakow, and is commanded

manded by an Engliſhman. I left off work, and marched along with them, making enquiries of the officers of their adventures in the land of Mahomet. This regiment had ſuffered much in the attack of that city: it conſiſts of a very fine body of men: they were all dreſſed in white jackets and trowſers of linen, for the convenience of marching in ſultry weather. Colonel Fanſhaw arrived, ſome days ſince, with his family: his little ſon, a boy not exceeding ten years of age, has already bled in the field of Mars: he was wounded in the ſiege of Oczakow; at an earlier period than when Alexander mounted firſt his war horſe, or Charles XII. of Sweden had heard the glorious whiſtle of a cannon ball.

This young hero has been nurſed at the mouth of a cannon: his father takes him with him in all his expeditions. The eagle teaches her brood to fly in the face of the ſun, to accuſtom their eyes to bear its fierceſt beams.

At the poſt-houſe people of every nation arrive daily. I mix with the crowd to gain

gain intelligence. Three ſmart French wenches came lately from Cronſtadt, attended by their gallant, Monſieur le Capitaine de Flotte: one of them came cloſe up to me, ſinging very prettily. "Monſieur," ſaid ſhe, "is there no chaiſe to be had?" "No, Madam," replied I, "there is no other ſort than what you ſee in the yard; travellers in this country generally make uſe of ſuch." They were ſmall waggons filled with ſtraw: there was no help for it. "Mon Dieu!" ſaid the girl, and directly jumped into the vehicle, reclining her handſome perſon among the litter. So the three French filles de chambre and Monſieur le Capitaine, packed into two ſtraw baſkets, made their triumphal entry into Peterſburg. With what good grace and good nature do theſe French accommodate themſelves to every circumſtance of life, while we ſulky Britons growl at froward fortune, and are awkward in all our motions! Foreigners ſmile when they ſee a plain honeſt Engliſhman make a bow in a wrong place, or more commonly at his not making a bow at all.

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We never yet could acquit ourſelves at the foot and hat exerciſe.

One of the Grand Dukes, a youth about nine years of age, ſeeing a naval officer paſſing through ſome of the apartments of the palace, aſked who it was?—His Highneſs being told it was an Engliſh officer of the Ruſſian fleet, and a brother to a lady who has the care of the young Princeſſes, went to the lady to enquire about her brother. "This was your brother," ſaid the Prince, "and an Engliſhman? Is he "a real, genuine Briton? Does he appear "frightened when he enters a room where "there is any company? Is he at a loſs "where to put his hat, when he is ſo po-"lite as to take it off?" The lady aſſured his Highneſs, "that her brother was in "every reſpect an Engliſhman."

The Princeſs Naſſau has arrived at Peterſburg. The young Princeſs arrived ſoon after, and lodged at the poſt-houſe for one night. She is a beautiful young creature. When ſhe arrived at the houſe, ſhe ordered, as is uſual for travellers of rank

rank when they ſtop, her bed from the carriage: it was ſpread upon the floor of the parlour, and the Princeſs, fatigued with her long journey, lay down to repoſe at two o'clock in the afternoon. The windows of the parlour had no curtains nor ſhutters; ſo, when I imagined the lady would be aſleep, I repaired to the window, and, taking my pencil, attempted to take her likeneſs. Prince Naſſau has already gained an important victory over the Swediſh galleys. The good fortune of this hero, under the Ruſſian banner, continues. Intelligence of this victory is juſt arrived, but I am not yet informed of the particulars.

Two captains of the Britiſh navy entered my room laſt night, in ſearch of a bed. They had come from Revel, where they had arrived from Denmark in a ſmall open boat, and viſited the Swediſh and Ruſſian navy in their paſſage. This is making very little of the dangerous navigation of the Baltic, notwithſtanding this is the fineſt ſeaſon of the year. The Baltic is how-

however liable to ſtorms at all ſeaſons, and theſe gentlemen encountered one, which had nearly put an end to their voyage. Captain Bentinck is the name of one of the gentlemen: I forget the name of the other. A Portugueſe Colonel is arrived here likewiſe from Revel and Stockholm. The Colonel informed me that he had made application to his Swediſh Majeſty for permiſſion to go by the way of Swediſh Finland, the ſeat of war: but this was refuſed, leſt ſome accident ſhould befall him in a journey through two hoſtile armies. He is a gentleman, I underſtand, of great property in the iſland of Madeira. At the expiration of his travels he marries the young daughter of the Chevalier de Pinto, late ambaſſador to the Court of London from Portugal, and now prime miniſter of that kingdom. The Colonel ſpeaks Engliſh very well: he informed me that he had reſided in London ſome years; and he ſpoke in raptures of our nation, making compariſons between it and the countries through which he had travelled. "But "money,"

"money," ſaid the Colonel, "is more ne-
"ceſſary in England than in other parts:
"it is true, one obtains for their caſh every
"luxury and conveniency, which cannot
"be had in other countries, in the ſame
"ſtyle, even for money."

Lord Wycombe, accompanied by Captain Markham, had paſſed for the Ruſſian metropolis. Ruſſia begins now to make a part of the grand tour, and not the leaſt curious or uſeful part of it. Mr. Howard is arrived at Peterſburg upon a tour of a different kind from every other; to pour oil and honey into the wounds of the unfortunate. His Excellency Mr. Whitworth and his Secretary Mr. Frazer were here to-day, and played together at billiards. Mr. Whitworth reſides within two miles of the poſt-houſe, at the country palace of Count Soltikoff, which he has for himſelf and ſuite during the ſummer.

Our Ambaſſador is much and deſervedly reſpected, notwithſtanding the unaccountable breach between the two Courts of London and Peterſburg. I call it unaccountable,

countable, becauſe in general two Courts that have been long in the habits of intercourſe and friendſhip, do not in ordinary fall out where there is no oppoſition of intereſt; much leſs when peace and friendſhip are the intereſt of both parties.

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LETTER XVIII.

Summer Amuſements in the Metropolis.—The Imperial Family.—The Public entertained at Count Strogonoff's Gardens.

St. Peterſburg, Auguſt 1789.

FROM my retirement amidſt woods and lakes, I have after an abſence of three months returned to Peterſburg. The city is ſtill deſerted by the nobility and gentry, who will not return from their country reſidence for ſome time, as the ſeaſon continues remarkably pleaſant, and it is ſeldom they enjoy ſuch weather in Auguſt.

Her Imperial Majeſty is arrived in the city from the palace of Zarſko Zelo, for the winter. A very numerous cavalcade attended her Majeſty; the whole preceded by a party of huſſar-guards. Catharine ſtopped

ſtopped at the Caſan church: Te Deum was ſung for the victories obtained over the enemies of the empire. I ſtood very near this great Sovereign, and could not help noticing, that the pictures given of Catharine II. in ſome books of Travels bear no reſemblance to the original.

Catharine II. is rather under the middle ſtature, and rather corpulent in her perſon; yet majeſtic in her deportment. This Empreſs has not only the art of appearing, but poſſeſſes the quality of being great. She ſeldom comes into public, even to the Theatre. The ſpread eagle over the empty box, facing the ſtage, points out where once her Majeſty ſat, and ſeems to point out too that the bird is flown. The Imperial palace in the city, and that at Zarſko Zelo, have each of them private theatres for the entertainment of the Court, and of others who have intereſt enough to procure tickets, which are given gratis. The Grand Duke, Paul Petrowitſch, is handſome in perſon, of a middling ſtature, and has ſomething greatly good in his countenance. The GrandDucheſs

chefs is majeftic both in her perfon and manner. The young Imperial Family are a group of lovely angels.

It is only within thefe few days that I have had an opportunity of obferving the Ruffian diverfions during fummer. I find the citizens crowding every evening into the gardens of the fummer palace upon the banks of the Neva. They are the St. James's Park of the Ruffians, and at this time a very delightful parade. Early this fummer I entered them for the firft time, and in walking through one of the bird-cage avenues, I met the Bafhaw of Oczakow, attended by feveral Turkifh officers. I ftepped afide, and viewed with refpect this illuftrious prifoner; one of the guardians of the crefcent. He is treated here with politenefs and attention, due to his fidelity and courage more than to his rank.

The gardens belonging to the cadet corps is another refort for the better clafs upon Sunday. Military mufic falutes the company from different parts of the gardens. This feafon provided a new military con-

cert. In the wooden building erected in the midst of a small piece of water, a band of Turkish performers were placed. Was it fair to make the sons of Mahomet fiddlers to *infidel* conquerors? These late drummers and fifers to the garrison of Oczakow gave the Russians a most melancholy and grating tune for their pains. The Turks beat a sort of drum with one stick, and made a sort of whistle produce melodies resembling the notes of a young pig when its ears are sharply pinched. The Russian drum and fife, the bassoon and clarionet, relieved at intervals my organs, and brought into order my sense of hearing, which was distracted with the Ottoman oratorio.

The young cadets, dressed in white or brown, agreeably to their ages, walked round the gardens, preceded by their masters: the youngest class by the women of the nursery. Parties of the oldest are encamped in the environs of the city, during summer, where they are taught their exercises, and particularly the management of the artillery. Hence it has been long ob-

ſerved of the Ruſſian army, that it is the beſt ſerved in the world with artillery, and artillery officers and engineers. Peter I. carried always a moveable fortreſs with his army: at the battle of Pultowa he had eighty cannon; the Swedes had four or ſix field pieces.

The Ruſſians take as much delight in the firing of guns as they do in ringing of bells. Artillery in ſummer makes a part of rural entertainments. I was yeſterday at one of the ſummer carnivals given by the nobility to the public. Count Strogonoff's villa and gardens are pleaſantly ſituated on one of the iſlands at the mouth of the Neva, and bordering on this river. Here were collected a very great concourſe of people of all ranks. In the front gallery of the Count's houſe were a choſen band of vocal and inſtrumental performers: the firſt conſiſted chiefly of boys and girls. As we walked in the foreſts adjoining to the houſe we were ſerenaded with favourite Ruſſian airs. Dukes, generals, admirals, traders, and boors, mixed

together. The tents, erected among the trees, received thofe guefts who conceived, with Sancho Pancha, that eating and drinking is the beft of all earthly enjoyments. I could fee a felect company of Germans, fnugly feated; their ears attentive to the mufic, their eyes to fome flices of ham.

Under a wooden pavilion open at the fides, thofe who chofe to exercife their limbs, had a room railed in for dancing, and a band of muficians. Here the ladies of eafy virtue, and the virtuous maiden dreffed in her Sunday gown, tripped about, to the great entertainment of the titled fpectators. Few join in this affembly, except the lower ranks; but the outfide of the rail was crowded with ladies of the firft diftinction.

A fky-rocket gave notice that the fireworks were begun. The affembly broke up: the fiddlers and dancers crowded together through the woods to the open area before Count Strogonoff's villa. A very entertaining Greenwich Park fcene too was exhibited, when beaus and belles, amidft a

difplay

diſplay of fireworks, endeavoured in tumultuous throngs to eſcape the falling fire-balls. The Count's windows and galleries accommodated his viſitors of quality, among whom were diſtributed the good things of this life. The Count has a property in iron mines from which he derives a liberal income, and which he ſpends with equal liberality. This evening's amuſement concluded with a general diſcharge of the cannon from a battery upon the banks of the Neva.

The company now filed off towards Peterſburg, ſome in coaches, others in troſkies, which convey half a dozen or a dozen people. The foreſt echoed with the ſound of wheels and ſongs. Several Ruſſians had devoted the day to Bacchus, and were ſinging his praiſes with all the ſtrength they had remaining. Their drunken ſongs are ſung in a different ſtrain from their ſober ditties, though the words and air may be the ſame. In the former you hear a continued roar, for ſome moments, or minutes, as their breath may hold out; ſilence then

ſucceeds for the ſame length of time, until they recover breath. When a drunken Ruſſian has finiſhed his firſt ſtanza and his breath, he reſts his head upon his ſhoulders, gaping for a freſh ſupply of æther: he recovers gradually, as from a fainting fit, and joins again the grand chorus of his friends. He who firſt recovers wind begins, and the reſt inſtantly accompany him, with what breath they have gathered. Many fall off from the troſky before the journey is ended; but the ſong is not interrupted by theſe trifling accidents: there is always one or two in their ſeats who keep the muſic alive: the driver ſtops the carriage, until his proſtrate brothers replace themſelves, but continues his ſong. Even the unfortunate, while they lie upon their back in the road, do not ceaſe to perform their taſk in the concert.

In the ſummer evenings, when the weather is calm, the citizens of Peterſburg delight in ſailing upon the Neva in their pleaſure boats. The boats of the nobility are very elegantly ornamented. The company

are ſeated in the ſtern, under a canopy of ſilk, or other ſtuff, and have with them muſicians; or frequently the party themſelves perform upon different inſtruments. The rowers are all choſen among ſuch of their ſervants as have the beſt voices; and they either ſing in concert with the inſtruments, or without them. When they have rowed the boat againſt the ſtream, beating time to their ſongs with the oars, they allow her to drive with the current, fixing their oars in a horizontal poſition from the boat ſides; and the rowers collect in a circle. It is at this period they exert their vocal powers, and make ſuch exquiſite harmony, as to draw the inhabitants to the galleries of their houſes upon the river's banks, and the foot paſſengers to the water's edge, to liſten to the muſic; and many follow the boat to enjoy their native tunes. The vocal and inſtrumental parts are generally performed alternately, and among the former is always one, who with a whiſtle, or by blowing upon his fingers, makes a very ſhrill noiſe, accompanying the muſic at intervals.

When the concert is ended, the audience upon the ſtreets go away, repeating the ſongs, and echoing them into every quarter of the city. Perhaps another boat, conveying another concert, approaches, and arreſts the auditors of the firſt melodies.

Theſe concerts often continue till ten and eleven o'clock at night; and when ſtill ſilence reigns upon the face of the waters, it is beyond the power of deſcription to convey any idea of the pleaſing effect they have upon the mind.

LETTER XIX.

Russian Climate.—A Russian Wedding.—Anecdote of an old Russian Soldier—of a Band of Gypsies.

Ingria, September 1789.

THE season still continues remarkably mild and pleasant. If this good weather continues a little longer, I shall alter my opinion of the Russian climate: this last summer has made us amends for the severe winter of 1788-89. Ever since the middle of April it has been hot and clear weather without interruption, and without being accompanied with so much thunder as we might naturally have expected. The gnats or musquitos venture abroad only in the day time; the evening, when the sun is down, turns cold, and the month fast approaches when these plagues of man and beast will be frozen for nine months. The

gnat is ſucceeded in the buſineſs of tormenting animals, by the common fly. It is chiefly in June and July that the gnat is troubleſome: the common fly bites in Auguſt and September. The ſting of the gnat is hardly felt while they remain fixed upon your hands or legs; the pain is occaſioned by the ſwelling afterwards. When the gnat is fixed, it is better to allow it to take its belly full of blood and go away. If it is killed upon the ſpot, ſome part of the proboſcis frequently remains in the wound, and cauſes more acute pain than would be felt otherwiſe. Rubbing the wound likewiſe augments the torture. The Ruſſian gentlemen generally wear thin leather ſtockings under their ſilk ones, to defend them from thoſe winged warriors. The bite of the common fly is inſtantly attended with a ſharp pain, but without any ſwelling. I dread them much more than I do the gnats, whoſe wounds I can cure without feeling uneaſineſs, by directly applying ſome lemon juice, when the plunderer has left me. I wear Indian muſquito trowſers, which are prefer-

preferable to ſtockings of leather, not being ſo warm.

The nobility have all gone into town, though a country reſidence is more delightful juſt now than at any time during the ſultry months. But the Ruſſian almanacks have fixed the entry of froſt and ſnow in September, and the gentry will not truſt in the flattering appearance of their ſkies. I am a whimſical Briton, and have come again to viſit woods and rivers while the ſun ſhines, and to enjoy the fragments of a Ruſſian ſummer, which the great folks deſpiſe.

I am told the winter comes, in the latitude of Peterſburg, with awful rapidity; and that you take farewell of ſummer at night, and hail the grim tyrant in the morning, who thunders around in a whirlwind, thickened with ſnow and icicles. Let him come! I muſt ſee it and feel it: nor will I retreat, even before a Scythian winter. Cronſtadt is yet filled with Britiſh ſhips, which have a long ſtormy voyage to perform, before they can anchor upon their native

tive ſhores. I have only two hours' journey to go into the city, and into ſhelter. The Britiſh ſhip-maſters call at the houſe I lodge at, in their way from Cronſtadt to Peterſburg, as they generally come over land, after paſſing from Cronſtadt to Oranienbaum. There are now ſeveral of them in the parlour making merry. I tell them to haſten their departure—mention the dangers of a late paſſage home—and preſs upon their recollection the riſk of having their veſſels frozen in the harbour of Cronſtadt. In reply they call for another bottle, taking notice of the late period at which they had ſailed from Ruſſia in former years.

We have a wedding in the poſt-houſe: the ſhip-maſters take a peep at the bride, and ſwear that ſhe is a good piece; adding many ſea-phraſes illuſtrative of her beauties and of the happineſs of the bridegroom. The bride is the daughter of one of the officers of the poſts: the bridegroom is a choriſter from one of the churches at St. Peterſburg.

I went with the company to the church of St. Sergius, to behold the Ruſſian ceremonies

monies at the altar of Hymen. The young couple kiſſed every ſaint within the walls, croſſing themſelves oppoſite to each. The prieſt, having made ſeveral geſtures and grimaces, joined their hands and kiſſed them. This was the ſignal for a univerſal attack upon the lips of all preſent. I hid myſelf in a corner to avoid the diſagreeable encounter of long beards: however, I ſoon recollected there was no occaſion for this precaution. The Ruſſians permit foreigners to behold every religious ceremony without demanding any outward reſpect or attention, either to prieſt or people, further than remaining uncovered and ſilent. The bride, from the time ſhe had yielded conſent, to the day of her nuptials, was attended in her hut by two ſuch virgins as herſelf; who continued ſinging with her from morning to night for two or three weeks. If ſhe paid a viſit in the neighbourhood, the attendant nymphs, ſinging as they went along, accompanied her. The bride's acquaintance, male and female, enter the hut during this feſtival, making what preſents they

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are able to beſtow, and in return, they are at liberty to kiſs the bride and bride's maids, who entertain them with ſongs into the bargain. Our cook, in the courſe of his viſit, has fallen a ſacrifice to the blue eyes of one of the bride's maids; but ſhe piques herſelf upon her family connections, and has refuſed the poor fellow: ſhe ſays ſhe is the Empreſs's ſlave, and that the cook is only the ſlave of a private gentleman.

The wedding folks, at their return from church, aſſembled in one of the rooms of the poſt-houſe; and Apollo and Daphne, of whom I have formerly made honourable mention, performed upon this, as they uſually do upon every great occaſion. The bridegroom, taking his bride by the hand, led the dance. This ended, he entertained us with his ſongs: and it is but juſtice to ſay, that he ſung like a nightingale.

It was formerly a cuſtom in Ruſſia, nor is it yet become wholly obſolete, for the friends of the young couple, ſoon after they had retired to reſt, to enquire if the marriage articles were completely ratified. I do not know

know whether or not this queſtion was aſked upon the preſent occaſion. The bride of herſelf declared next morning, with tears in her eyes, that ſhe had been cheated! and that her huſband was good for nothing but for ſinging of hymns. The bridegroom looked very ſilly. A monk, his acquaintance, who came with the choriſter from Peterſburg, declared, that he was a very good kind of man, and that he had lent him thirty rubles to bear the expence of the wedding dinner. The fathers have, perhaps, ſent abroad this ſyren to charm a few birds into their net.

The watchman at the poſt-office is an old ſoldier, of eighty years of age. He tells us of the engagements in which he had fought, in the war with Pruſſia, in the reign of the Empreſs Elizabeth. This veteran was lately found in the wood, in amorous dalliance with the gardener's wife, whom he had debauched from the paths of virtue with a bottle of Ruſſian brandy. The other ſervants dogged the turtles to their neſt, ſtripped the ſheep's ſkin from the

warrior's

warrior's back, carried it to the nearest spirit-shop, and pawned it for brandy; to which mulct offenders against the laws of chastity among the rural nymphs and swains are liable in Russia.

In my walks a few days ago I encountered with a band of gypsies, the first I had seen in the country. The females, as usual, offered, for a small gratuity, to scan the secrets of fate and futurity. There were several beautiful girls journeying bare-footed with the caravan, an itinerant beggar's opera. I had seen a party of this squadron at some distance, at the window of a Finlander's hut, and heard them earnestly entreating the landlady to give them bread and salt. The landlady remained obdurate, and the prayers of the gypsies were changed into curses. I entered the same hut, and procured some milk. The woman of the house told me that she was daily plagued with those people. That she gave them sometimes bread in summer; but that the long winter approaching, and having a large family, she could not spare any thing from her store of provisions.

LETTER XX.

Deſcription of the City of Peterſburg.—Old Peterſburg.—The Citadel.—Williams Iſland.—The Exchange.—Muſeum.—Imperial Academies.—Cadet Corps.—Statue of Peter the Great.—Imperial Palace, &c. &c.

St. Peterſburg, October 1789.

PETERSBURG, with all its ſtately palaces and gilded domes, is ſituated in the midſt of a wood, as wild and barren as any in the north. It preſents a wonderful picture of what power and genius can accompliſh. Independently of art, the Neva is its only ornament: a dead, ſandy, flat country, covered with bruſh-wood, ſurrounds it upon every ſide; a few miſerable huts, ſcattered about, complete the ſcene. The great Pe-

ter did not look to the moſt beautiful, but to the moſt uſeful ſpot, for the ſcite of his capital: his object was commerce ſolely. Peterſburg is the emporium for naval, Moſcow for rural affairs. The Ruſſian empire, extending over a conſiderable part of Europe and Aſia, muſt have a capital city to every kingdom of which it conſiſts. Tobolſky is the chief city of the Ruſſian dominions under the pole, and bordering upon China; Petro Pauloufky, of the eaſtern countries adjoining to America and Japan; Orenburg, of the provinces bordering upon Tartary and India; Caſan and Aſtrakan, of kingdoms of the ſame name, near the frontiers of Perſia; Cherſon, of the Crimea and provinces adjoining; and Kioff and Mohilow, of the Ukrane and Little and White Ruſſia bordering upon Turkey and Poland.

The city of Peterſburg is not huddled together: it ſpreads out like the wings of the Imperial eagle. The principal quarter ſtands upon the continent, and upon the ſouth banks of the river Neva; the ſecond diviſion is what is called Old Peterſburg,

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and is ſituated upon ſeveral iſlands towards the north banks; the third quarter upon Williams Iſland, in the middle channel of the Neva, betwixt the other two. This noble river, after embracing the whole in its courſe, empties itſelf into the Gulph of Finland immediately below the city. The old city, originally built upon one iſland, bearing its name, now ſtretches over ſeveral leſſer ones. It is very irregularly built, and conſiſts chiefly of wooden houſes: here, however, are the firſt objects that draw attention—the citadel, in which is the cathedral, a fine pile of building, with its gilded ſpire and turrets; whoſe ſparkling grandeur ſtrikes the eye at a great diſtance, and marks the ſacred ſpot where lie interred the remains of Peter I. and his Empreſs, the Livonian villager, Catharine I. This is the Ruſſian Mecca, and none but infidels will neglect to make a pilgrimage to it. Mahomet's ſplendid impoſture collects together a crowd of vagrant Turks and Arabs; but the mauſoleum of Peter attracts the philoſopher as well as the war-

rior, from every corner of enlightened Europe: the firſt admires the legiſlator; the ſecond comes to touch the bones of Scanderbeg!

The boat which gave Peter the idea of building a navy, is carefully preſerved in a ſmall houſe near the ſepulchre: it is emphatically called the *Grand Sire*. Before this relic was depoſited here, a naval review took place at Cronſtadt: the *Grand Sire* had the honour of carrying the Admiral's flag, and received a general ſalute from the Ruſſian fleet.

Some will ſay, that the Ruſſian nation is not yet civilized; and that Peter only began the work of civilization—of arts and ſciences. What a narrow thought! When the work is finiſhed it is his. Will ſucceeding monarchs think themſelves diſgraced in being named the diſciples of this immortal Prince? He gave the plan of the building—he laid the foundations, and reared a part of the walls! Succeeding monarchs are his workmen, his bricklayers, ſlaters, carpenters, painters, and upholſterers.

Catharine II. is the moſt diſtinguiſhed of Peter's work people, and has made ſuch elegant improvements upon the original plan, that it is ſo far become her own. The hatchet was the Emperor's favorite inſtrument: his work was uſeful, but unpoliſhed. He ſeemed to be ſenſible of this, and early called in the aſſiſtance of a female. Another Catharine is born to him: the fine arts go hand in hand with thoſe of war, of agriculture and commerce.

From Old Peterſburg we proceed along a bridge of boats to Williams Iſland. Upon the north ſide, and fronting the old town, are the merchants wharfs, the exchange, the cuſtom-houſe, and warehouſes. In the river, between Old Peterſburg and Williams Iſland, lie all the veſſels that take down to Cronſtadt the produce of Ruſſia, to the larger foreign ſhips, that cannot come to Peterſburg, the channel being narrow and ſhallow at the mouth of the river. Theſe veſſels likewiſe bring from Cronſtadt all goods imported, landing them at the cuſtom-houſe to ſecure the duties. The ſouth

ſide of Williams Iſland fronts the new city of Peterſburg; and here is built a ſuperb line of houſes, among which are the Imperial Academies and the Muſeum. The Imperial Academy of Sciences is a grand ſtructure, and is amply endowed for its ſupport. The profeſſors are eminent in the republic of letters, and are of different nations. Her Imperial Majeſty, to adorn thoſe eſtabliſhments, ſelects merit from every climate and country.

The muſeum is ſituated upon the higheſt and eaſt point of Williams Iſland, oppoſite to the imperial palace upon the continent to the ſouth; and the citadel to the north. The weſt point of this iſland reaches to the mouth of the Neva. The muſeum, I beg her Imperial Majeſty's pardon, is a ſmall warehouſe, containing ſamples of the various productions of her empire. This world of dominion furniſhes a muſeum of itſelf; yet no expence has been ſpared to complete the collection with every curious production from other countries. Here the naturaliſt and merchant find equal pleaſure;

the one views with rapture the veins of gold, ſilver, and lead, in the native ore; the other conſiders how much one hundred weight will produce of pure metal.

The Cadet Corps, or Academy of War, formerly the palace of Prince Menzikoff, is ſituated betwixt the Academy of Sciences and the Muſeum: is the nurſery of young warriors, the ſons of the nobility and gentry; and from this ſeminary of Mars are taken the officers for the army. The palace of Prince Menzikoff was applied to its preſent uſe by Count Munich. There are a number of buildings adjoining, for the accommodation of the young gentlemen.

The hiſtory of Menzikoff is romantic. Raiſed from the humbleſt ſtation to the rank of prince, then racked upon the wheel of fortune; yet, in every ſituation, the art military continued his favourite ſtudy. During his baniſhment in Siberia, the table of his cottage was always covered with maps and plans of the countries, the ſeats of former wars, and of battles in which he had been engaged;—ſtill delighting in what had

occaſioned his fall, and poring over his deſtruction! It muſt appeaſe his manes, that his houſe is ſtill the nurſery of war.

Except this line of building upon the banks of the Neva, and another ſtreet, the whole of this quarter of the city conſiſts of wooden houſes. Theſe are built very regularly in ſtreets interſecting each other at right angles: canals run through the middle of the ſtreets; but, owing to the level ſurface of the ground, the water in them, in the heat of ſummer, ſtagnates, and is offenſive. They ſerve no good purpoſe, and it would be proper to fill them up with earth.

A bridge of boats croſſes the Neva oppoſite the Cadet Corps, making a communication from Williams Iſland to the grand quarter of the city upon the continent. As you walk along this bridge, you have a front view of the equeſtrian ſtatue of Peter I. which is erected upon the oppoſite bank of the river: the horſe, upon the ſummit of a rock, majeſtically rearing, and pawing the air—ſeems conſcious of his rider—" he ſmells " the battle afar off; his neck is clothed

"with thunder." Around the ſtatue are always ſeveral Ruſſians, attended by ſome biographer. You can trace, without any knowledge of the language, by the geſtures of the orator and his audience, when he is recording the defeat at Narva, or the victory at Pultowa. They add in theſe orations, that Peter ſtood upon the very rock which now ſupports his effigy, while he beheld the Swediſh army fly from the field of battle. I have taken a drawing of this celebrated work of M. Falconer. I was aſſiſted by an engraving from a drawing of Young, and have endeavoured to correct ſome errors in that drawing; or perhaps his engraver has not done juſtice to the drawing. "When an heroic "monument," ſays M. Falconer *, "is to "be conſecrated to the memory of a prince, "and this prince has achieved great matters "in various and even oppoſite departments "—he has gained victories in war—he has "enacted wiſe laws, and founded eſtabliſh-

* Tranſlation from the French of M. Falconer's Pieces on Sculpture, by the Rev. Mr. Tooke of Peterſburg.

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" ments conducive to the happineſs of his
" people in time of peace—his academical
" eulogium may turn upon both theſe texts;
" but in a ſtatue, which can repreſent but one
" inſtant, we muſt conſider and chooſe. If
" we give a preference to his civil qualities
" over his military virtues, this preference
" cannot juſtly be condemned, till it ſhall
" certainly be determined which of theſe two
" kinds of glory belongs more particularly
" to him, who has ſo well deſerved them
" both; but more eſpecially, which of them
" was moſt uſeful to the happineſs of man-
" kind. The habit I have given the ſtatue
" of Peter the Great, is the habit of all na-
" tions—of all men—of every age—in a
" word, it is an heroic habit."

Upon the right hand of the ſtatue, and to the eaſt, is the Admiralty and Dock-yards, and immediately beyond theſe the Imperial palace. At this inſtant there are two firſt rate ſhips of war building under the Palace windows! From the Admiralty ſpire, all the ſtreets run out as radii from the centre of a circle. The principal ſtreet is that line of

buildings fronting the Neva, for an extent of between three and four English miles. The bank for the same extent is lined with granite stone, with balustrades, and footpath of the same materials. Near the extremities of this superb street, called the Grand Million, and which, taking the course of the Neva, forms a vast obtuse angle, a canal is cut across the main land, making the base of this angle, and surrounding the city upon the continent to the south; so that this quarter is entirely inclosed, with the Neva on one side, and this canal upon the other, for an extent of about eight miles; the whole bank lined with granite stone, having granite balustrades or iron railing. Over these canals are erected draw-bridges, likewise built of granite stone. The quarter without this canal may be deemed the suburbs; the houses are mostly of wood, but the houses within the canal are mostly of brick, and plaistered, painted with every variety of colours. No house is suffered to be rebuilt within the canal, of wood, but with brick; and the new is quickly driving the old city out of the gates!

Amidſt theſe modern fabrics, the Ruſſian churches every where ſhoot up their antique turrets! The Ruſſians hold the form of their church-walls as ſacred as their forms of religion within them. The roofs are covered with block-tin, and many of them gilded.

There are in Peterſburg three Imperial palaces: the palace near the Admiralty, in which her Imperial Majeſty reſides, is a magnificent edifice of brick ſtuccoed, and adjoining is a long range of buildings fronting the Neva, including the private theatre of the Court. The Marble Palace is built of the ſtone which gives it this name. The architect has made what ought to have been the gavel, the front of this ſuperb building, which ſeems itſelf to bluſh at its poſture. The third is the Summer Palace, built of timber, and yet the moſt regular and elegant. It is placed in the ſummer gardens upon the banks of the river, and is truly a delightful reſidence.

The Ruſſian nobles, and even the middling ranks, exceed in the elegance of their houſes. In the Aſiatic ſtyle, they are all built in

ſquares;

ſquares; an open court in the centre, to which is an entry by a large gate-way. With this taſte is mixed the Grecian and Italian: and Corinthian, Ionic, and other ornaments are too much crowded upon the ſlight fabric of brick and plaiſter. It would be better to finiſh their houſes in a plainer ſtyle; and the eaſier expence would enable the poſſeſſors to keep them in better repair. Nothing looks ſo tawdry as a Corinthian cornice of plaiſter in ruins. The new church near the equeſtrian ſtatue is building of the fineſt Siberian marble, and will be one of the moſt coſtly and ſuperb ſtructures in the univerſe. The granite banks of the Neva, the equeſtrian ſtatue of Peter I. and this admirable building, will deliver down to the lateſt poſterity the name of Catharine II. But Catharine is imperial in every thing; and poſterity will overlook even theſe monuments, amidſt the continued diſplay of great actions. The palace near the Admiralty is ſituated at the point of the angle which the river makes; and here the Neva rolls his tide, embracing the lodging of his ſovereign.

ſovereign. From this ſpot one has the grandeſt proſpect imaginable: before you, upon the other ſide of the river, is the old city, with its citadel and gilded ſpire; the houſes ſurrounded or intermixed with woods. Williams Iſland preſents another proſpect of a different nature: a wood of maſts, planted in front of the ſtreets. To the right and left is the Grand Million, every houſe in which is of elegant ſtructure, and inhabited by the principal Ruſſian nobility and gentlemen. The Admiralty dock-yards are ſoon to be removed to Cronſtadt, a more convenient place, adapted to the ſcite of the naval yards. The vacancy from the palace to the equeſtrian ſtatue and Senate Houſe will be filled with buildings; and the Grand Million will be one continued range of taſte and ſplendor.

I am at a loſs to gueſs what induced the Emperor to pitch upon ſo awkward a ſpot for dock-yards; from which the ſhips muſt be tranſported to Cronſtadt, over ſhoals, by means of wooden camels, when this trouble could have been ſo eaſily avoided by building

ing his navy at the harbour where they lie, and where there is a great depth of water and every accommodation. The machines called camels are conſtructed of two pieces, or a ſort of half-veſſels, built in the ſame manner as other veſſels, but of a ſingular ſhape. They are ſquare at the bottom, the ends, and one ſide; the other ſide is hollow and rounding. Theſe half-veſſels are ſunk to a proper depth, one at each ſide of the ſhip of war they are intended to carry; and their hollow ſides, being drawn cloſe to her, form a capacious womb which embraces the ſhip of war. They are ſtrongly wrapped together with cables. The water is then pumped out of the camels; they riſe, and with them the ſhip of war! Perhaps you will have a better idea of the camels, by ſuppoſing an oblong ſhaped baſon cut length-ways from the top to the bottom: the hol-low ſides of each half baſon will exactly reſemble thoſe of the half camels. Again, join the two halves together, and they form the womb which receives the burthen. The

camels

camels with their loads do not draw above eight to eleven feet of water.

Peter, probably anxious to ſhew his navy to the Ruſſians, built his ſhips at Peterſburg, where there was a greater number to look at them. He had experienced difficulty in prevailing upon his ſubjects to come to the capital, and ſtill more in making them embark for Cronſtadt. The moment they beheld the Finland Gulph and heard the roaring ſurge, they made a full ſtop, or ſhrunk back with terror at the awful deſigns of their Prince!

LET-

LETTER XXI.

Deſcription of Cronſtadt.—Fortreſs of Cronſlot.—Admiralty.—Naval Cadet Academy. Palace of Oranienbaum.—Palace of Peterhoff.—Anecdotes of Peter the Great.

St. Peterſburg, January 1790.

IN arriving from the Baltic, at the head of the Gulph of Finland, you ſee before you a ſmall low iſland, partly covered with woods, and at the eaſt end the city and fortifications of Cronſtadt. Oppoſite to theſe, and to the entrance of the harbour, to the ſouth, at a quarter of a mile's diſtance, is the fortreſs of Cronſlot, built upon a bank in the ſea. The foundations of the fortreſs are ſeveral feet under water. The channel leading from Cronſtadt to the open gulph is very narrow, which conſtitutes its ſtrength.

A few ſhips of the line could defend it againſt a very ſuperior force.

The harbour of Cronſtadt is formed by wooden and ſtone piers, projecting in a half moon from the main body of the iſland. Theſe piers ſerve at the ſame time as ramparts, and are planted with a number of heavy cannon. This harbour is divided into three grand diviſions: the moſt weſterly is for the merchant ſhips, which lie in lines abreaſt of each other, moored at buoys. The middle and eaſt diviſions are appropriated for the Ruſſian navy. From the middle harbour a canal runs to the centre of the town, where the Admiralty and dock-yards are conſtructing. The banks of this canal are faced with granite, and the docks and piers will likewiſe be finiſhed with the ſame durable and elegant material. The fortreſs of Cronſlot is entirely built from the granite quarries.

The Ruſſians are neceſſarily ſuperb in their public buildings: they have no other materials for ſuch works than marble, granite, and jaſper. Their palaces are built with the two firſt; and the inſide walls are wainſ-

cotted with agate, jaſper, and lapis lazuli. Siberia furniſhes a variety of precious ſtones, and enables the Ruſſian monarchs to vie in ſplendor with thoſe princes of India of whoſe magnificence the accounts appear romantic.

The Admiralty will contain every accommodation for the officers employed in it, as well as barracks for the officers of the navy reſiding at Cronſtadt, who have apartments and other neceſſaries at the expence of Government at all times. The whole will be one of the moſt complete and noble works of the age. Admiral Greig was the active agent in all theſe undertakings.

The town of Cronſtadt is pretty regularly built, but conſiſts moſtly of wooden houſes. Except a few buildings for the reception of the officers of Government and for the naval cadets, it has no ornament but its harbour. The removal of the Admiralty from Peterſburg is in every reſpect neceſſary, to give importance and elegance to the Plymouth of Ruſſia.—Cronſtadt is a well-choſen ſeminary for the naval cadets: they have

here the practice of ſeamanſhip continually before their eyes: they view in the weſt the ſtormy ocean, and are daily accuſtomed to ſcenes in which they are intended themſelves to act.

The Gulph of Finland contracts itſelf below Cronſtadt, cloſing gradually in a ſemicircle towards that port and Peterſburg. The breadth of the gulph at Cronſtadt is about fifteen miles, from the Carelian to the Ingrian ſhore. The firſt, to the north, preſents to the view nothing but gloomy woods: Ingria, to the ſouth, is proudly decorated with the palaces of Oranienbaum, Peterhoff, and Strelina, and a number of the ſeats of the nobility. Oranienbaum is directly oppoſite to Cronſtadt. I embarked in one of the boats which ply the paſſage here. The winds gently fanned our ſails: the ſooty clouds in the weſtern horizon threatened a ſudden ſtorm. The ſeamen pulled hard at the oar to gain the land before it ſhould overtake us. We had juſt entered the harbour of Oranienbaum, when the whirlwind thundered around our heads.

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Some boats were at this moment paſſing to Cronſtadt: they were hid in the ſpray of the ſea, and in the gloomy ſqualls; and I remained in dreadful ſuſpence for the fate of the paſſengers!

The palace of Oranienbaum is ſituated on a riſing ground: the city ſpreads upon the ſhore, nearer the ſea; and the harbour is at a mile's diſtance from both, but communicating with them by means of a canal which reaches to the park gates of the palace. The ground through which this canal paſſes is ſwampy—the banks have been conſtructed at a great expence, with earth and ſtones. To the weſtward of Oranienbaum the coaſt ſwells into hills, variegated with woods and farm-houſes.

The palace of Oranienbaum conſiſts of different buildings, connected by galleries. From the top of theſe, one has a delightful proſpect of the ocean covered with veſſels, of Cronſtadt and of Peterſburg. It originally belonged to the celebrated Menzikoff. The apartments are neat, but convey no idea of princely reſidence. The gardens are ſmall,

and in the old Dutch ſtyle: in them however is a fine piece of water, where lie ſeveral pleaſure yachts. The riſing grounds and woods on all ſides of this lake give it the appearance of a harbour land-locked, and you look around to diſcover where it communicates with the ſea.

The city of Oranienbaum is a collection of wooden houſes, and contains nothing worthy the notice of a traveller. It is a kind of out-poſt to the capital, and one or two regiments of horſe or foot are generally ſtationed here: at preſent it is crowded with Coſſac troopers. The road from this place to Peterhoff is cloſe by the ſhore, through a deep ſand and wild foreſts; yet here, to gladden the dreary journey, we meet with ſome gentlemen's country ſeats. I arrived at laſt at the village of Peterhoff, and paſſing under an avenue of branching trees, in which are built ſeveral handſome wooden houſes for the accommodation of the Court when her Imperial Majeſty reſides at the palace of Peterhoff, I ſaw this famous lodging before me.

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The palace of Peterhoff, bearing the name of its great founder, is ſituated upon a riſing ground; the gardens extending from the palace to the ſea ſhore. Peterhoff is a long, narrow building, and, for the time it was built, elegant. It has only one range of apartments, but theſe are handſome and ſuperb. This was the Imperial hamlet of Peter. It was a great ſtretch of his magnificence in things only ornamental, when he laid the foundation of Peterhoff: it was intended for the entertainment of foreign ambaſſadors, rather than for his own convenience.

Peter was never at eaſe in his robes: the hatchet and ſword were always in his mind; and he ſometimes forgot himſelf ſo far, as to invite the ambaſſador to aſſiſt him in cutting down trees for his dock-yards! He was another Uncle Toby; but his plans were not to be executed in leſs bounds than thoſe which the univerſe afforded!

In this houſe are pictured the naval triumphs of Ruſſia, ſacred to the memory of its firſt inhabitant, and creator of the navy—

the defeat of the Turkiſh fleet in the Archipelago, and their total deſtruction in the Bay of Tſcheſme, by the Ruſſian fleet, under the command of Count Alexis Orlow. The Turkiſh fleet, the town and fortreſs of Tſcheſme, were totally deſtroyed, and here they are ſtill burning on the canvaſs! But the grand collection of Ruſſian ſtatues and paintings is depoſited in the palace of Zarſko-Zelo.

The famous John Barclay, in the beginning of the laſt century, wrote a book, which he entitled Icon Animorum, A Picture of Minds; or, The Characters of Nations. Were ſuch a book as this, or even ſhort ſketches of national characters and cuſtoms, accompanied by paintings repreſenting the various *coſtumes*, dreſſes, attitudes, ordinary amuſements and occupations of the people of different countries; the ſtudy of modern hiſtory, as well as of the influence of climate, food, and manners, in the formation of the countenance and ſtature—and of phyſiognomy too, if there be ſuch a ſcience—would be facilitated and extended to an

aſtoniſhing

aſtoniſhing degree. The painted figures, compared and contraſted with each other, would convey inſtruction by a kind of intuitive diſcernment, and all the powers of the mind would be enlivened. Even without any written account, an aſſemblage of the phyſiognomies, features, dreſſes, and ſhapes of all nations, in all countries, with the moſt habitual attitudes of their members, would preſent of itſelf a noble field of ſpeculation, and contribute very much to the advancement of the moſt intereſting ſcience—the ſcience of man.

This magnificent deſign might be attempted, not without a degree of ſucceſs, by the graving tool. But there are ſeveral particulars in the pictures of nations, which cannot be hit off by the engraver, though they may be repreſented with great felicity by the painter—ſuch as the tints and ſhades of complexion, the appearance of the ſky, the colour of the foliage, and other natural objects, that form the ground on which the human figures are introduced.

Such a *Tableau de Nations* would be an act of munificence to the muſes, worthy of the

preſent

prefent Emprefs of Ruffia. As there is no fovereign prince who fways the fceptre over fo many nations, fo there is none to whom the world can fo naturally look up for fo grand and fo various a picture. The Emperors of China, in their extenfive and magnificent gardens, endeavour to exhibit as it were a miniature picture of the natural world: it would be an object worthy of Catharine II. to enrich the republic of art, and alfo that of fcience, by a delineation of moral character. Peterhoff is the naval houfe of Ruffia; Oranienbaum the military houfe. In this laft is a fine painting, reprefenting the glorious battle of Pultowa; in which, too, the original builder of the manfion, Menzikoff, performed a principal part. Every thing belonging to this Alexander has been confecrated to military ufe.

The gardens are in the fame ftyle with the others: the ftatues of gods and goddeffes keep fentry at every turning; and cafcades roll down gilded ftairs in place of rocks, which are a fcarce commodity in this province; and every cafcade, and brook, and lake, have their guardian deities. Peterhoff

gardens present a picture of Lapland mythology: Neptune is placed upon his car in a fish-pond, drawn by sea-horses; and, as usual, the courtiers swimming round their sovereign, and sounding his praise through sea-shells.

The arts and sciences never approached Russia, until these statues appeared. They are sacred, and the arm that removes them shall wither from its shoulder. The gardens should likewise be preserved in their present state.

Upon the banks of a small lake, near the shore, is a house in which Peter usually resided, and enjoyed himself in living without that pomp which his residence in the larger mansion obliged him to assume: here the servants shew the fishing and hunting accoutrements of the Emperor, and the utensils of cookery with which this hero dressed his beef-stakes! I suspect that they are only copies of the original, which, no doubt, are removed into safer custody. The servants, no doubt, make money of these *relics*; the reverence for the memory of Pe-

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ter will increaſe the price; and the guards have, unqueſtionably, cheated as many watchmen as at the tomb of the Prophet.

In the lake are a great variety of fiſh, perch, carp, and other kinds. It is not permitted to any one to throw a hook, and the finny tribe are ſo familiar from this good uſage, that they will take a bit of bread almoſt out of your hand.

I went to ſee the diamond mills. To this manufactury are brought the precious ſtones found in Siberia and other parts.

Near Peterhoff, and in the midſt of a foreſt, is a garden executed in the modern Engliſh taſte—a very delightful ſpot; and, when the natural flatneſs of the ground is conſidered, it is amazing what art and taſte have been exerted in finiſhing it.—Here are winding rivulets, caſcades daſhing over moſs-clad rocks, antique bridges, temples, ruins, and cottages. In one of the huts I found a collection of prints, from the ſubject of Sterne's Sentimental Journey: *La Fleur's* dapple ſeemed to be running off with the jack-boots to the pole. In this garden

is building a new palace for the Grand Duke. At Peterhoff, the elegant road, formerly noticed, begins, and continues from this palace to the gates of the capital. The verst pillars are built of granite and marble. This road is level as a bowling-green: the distance to Petersburg is twenty-six versts, or eighteen miles. Strelina palace is nine versts from Peterhoff, and seventeen from the metropolis.

I am sorry to inform you of the failure of Mr. G——e S——l, one of the British factors here. His character among his countrymen, and among the Russians, was, and still is, highly esteemed. If the ambassadors at foreign courts were employed in affording patronage and assistance to those subjects of their respective sovereigns settled abroad, who do honour to their nation, they would be more usefully engaged than at present, in being the agents of war, and of the intrigues of their cabinets.

LETTER XXII.

The Abbé Chappe d'Auteroche—his invidious Account of the Russians.—The vague Accounts given by late Travellers, and the Cause of it.—Character of the Russians.

Ingria, March 1790.

It is to be regretted, that most of the writers upon this empire, have either given way to prejudice, or, on the contrary, were not at liberty to speak freely. Travellers of our own nation, from whom we might have expected the best accounts, post along with such rapidity, that they seldom mention what is most material for us to know: they fill up volumes with tedious historical scraps; which, however valuable, are not to the purpose. The objects of a traveller and of an historian are different. The Abbé Chappe d'Auteroche, though he travelled

velled with the utmoſt expedition in Ruſſia, was determined to decide upon the character of the nation. He ſeems to have viewed the faults of the Ruſſians with the ſame teleſcope through which he obſerved the tranſit of Venus at Toboliki.

I am ſtill at a loſs to ſpeak certainly of the character of the Ruſſians. Is it fair to judge of a whole nation, by the heterogeneous mixture of people in Peterſburg, a new metropolis? What are we to do? Shall we rely upon the accounts given us by foreigners reſiding in Peterſburg? Theſe are acquainted and connected only with the low traders among the Ruſſians, who are, perhaps, as keen in their dealings as any people. Would it be fair to judge of the nations of Europe by the heterogeneous ſamples to be found in the warehouſes here?

Peterſburg is only the advanced guard of the Ruſſian empire. We muſt refrain from pointed criticiſms upon the character of the natives, until we have viſited them at head quarters—in their private receſſes

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in their villages, in the kingdoms of Kioff, of Moſcovy, of Tiver, and of Novogorod. The Abbé d'Auteroche refuſes them any title to ingenuity; but, unfortunately, he gives as a proof of his aſſertion, what proves exactly the reverſe:

"In the Ruſſian armies," ſays he, "the "neceſſary tradeſmen are not taken out of "the ſhops of artificers, but a recruit is, by "the officer, deſtined to exerciſe any par-"ticular art, to which, from his ſize or "ſhape, he appears to be beſt adapted. A "lockſman, for inſtance, is wanted in the "company; a recruit has a lock put into "his hands as a model, and he is ordered "to make one like it. This word of com-"mand he executes, we are told, with the "greateſt addreſs: it is only neceſſary that "the model be perfect in its kind; he "would otherwiſe copy it with all its moſt "glaring defects."

It might be anſwered to the Abbé: the ſoldier being ordered to make the one lock like the other, did right in making it exactly ſo.

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The Abbé allows that the Ruſſians are excellent at imitation; and if the inſtance he is pleaſed to mention in a common peaſant is not a proof of ingenuity, it will be hard to define what is meant by the word. Let a lock in the ſame manner be put into the hands of a French or Engliſh peaſant, they would fail even in copying the defects. The Abbé d'Auteroche attributes this imaginary want of intellect to their flat country and hot ſtoves: but he grants that they are capable of being taught. Is this any poverty of mind? Did the Abbé teach himſelf the knowledge of the planets, or was he obliged to ſome ſyſtem of others? He, no doubt, made improvements from his own obſervations; but then, he had been taken from a work-ſhop, and was not a raw recruit.

The Ruſſians are, at this day, children in the arts: yet, comparatively with other nations, they have made quicker improvements ſince the date of their firſt attempt. A traveller without much ingenuity may find out a field for criticiſm, without touching on the dull brains of the inhabitants. The young generation are full of life and

fire, and reſemble much the Engliſh youth of the ſame age. In this latitude, it is fairer to judge of the capability of the nation by the ſon than by the father; and before local evils have laid hold, as it were, of their characters. Their inordinate deſire for money is ſtrange, if it be true, that they hold it by ſo precarious a tenor as the will of their lords. Nothing but their love of brandy exceeds this; and for nothing elſe will they voluntarily part with caſh.

The love of money pervades the higher ranks, if we can call it a love of money to wiſh for it only to have the pleaſure of ſpending it. The nobility are fond of pomp; and, in order to ſupport it, gold is wanted. The Court of Ruſſia has long been famous for its ſplendour. The connection of this empire with India in former times, gave Ruſſia the means as well as taſte for eaſtern magnificence. The modern Knoetzes inherit, from their fathers at Moſcow, the taſte, but modern extravagance exhauſts the means; and this ſometimes occaſions an avaricious conduct, from which the

the worſt impreſſions have been received of the nobles and princes. The vanity of military rank puts it out of their power to increaſe their fortunes, which a ſtrict attention to their peaſants and eſtates would ſoon change for the better.

From this neglect ariſes a dependance upon government and upon great men in offices—a burthen to all parties. Their ſituation is the ſame as the nobility of other nations, where military parade and war are deemed more honourable than the arts of peace. Yet, even in our wealthy iſland, the extravagance of the higher ranks is not be ſupported by the moſt affluent fortunes, and too many of them depend upon the court. After having ſquandered their fortunes among the public they become penſioners upon thoſe whom they had thus patroniſed.

LETTER XXIII.

Of the Plan adopted by Catherine II. for the Emancipation of the Ruſſian Peaſantry.—Manners and Cuſtoms of the Ruſſians.—The Simplicity of the Religion of the Peaſantry.

Ingria, June 1790.

BEFORE we beſtow the appellation of barbarous upon the Ruſſians—before we even call them ſlaves, it will be fair to look round among the other nations of Europe, and enquire what are the virtues and liberties which they boaſt of? If the moſt civilized are the moſt luxurious, which it might be eaſy to prove, they cannot be either virtuous or free. We ſhall find that luxury has debauched every European nation; and that thoſe who boaſt moſt of liberty, are loaded with taxes, occaſioned

by the wars of ambitious miniſters, ſupported by a venal repreſentation of venal electors! If this be the ſituation of the moſt powerful, and the freeſt nation upon earth, it will take away from the odious ſtigma of ſlave and barbarian ſo liberally given to a happy race of men. I may here obſerve, that the people being the root and ſtem of conſtitutions and laws, they muſt firſt amend themſelves, before they can expect any good reformation. To begin by lopping branches is a ridiculous proceſs.

The ſituation of the Ruſſians, in regard to freedom and civilization is juſt what it ought to be, or might naturally be expected in their preſent circumſtances, which have been the circumſtances of every other nation in their turn.

I have ſeen learned treatiſes upon the ſubject of ſlavery, by thoſe who have never ſeen a ſlave. They recommend to tear the bandages at once from eyes which have long remained in darkneſs, and expoſe them at once to the beams of the meridian ſun. It may be as well, and as prudent, gradually

to prepare the way to freedom, by implanting principles of morality in their minds, in order to give them juft ideas of the principles and particulars in which liberty confifts, and of their duties to God and man: in fhort, to free the mind before the body. This is the field in which the political reformer fhould labour. It is only by the gradual maturation of moral caufes, that rude and favage nature is to be trained up to the exercife of virtue, and the enjoyment of liberty. Let them firft be made capable of being good members of what we call civilized fociety, or let them remain as they are, lefs luxurious, lefs vicious, and, if you will, lefs polifhed and free than we are.

Her Imperial Majefty, in eftablifhing foundling hofpitals in many different parts of the empire, eftablifhes with them a nurfery of freedom. In thefe the children of as many as pleafe are received and educated, and put apprentices to any trade they may choofe, when they arrive at a proper age; and they are thenceforth in every refpect free. The new fchools, planted in every

part

part of Ruſſia for the education of youth, equally ſerve to promote the cauſe of liberty. Her Imperial Majeſty was willing to give liberty even by more rapid means; and in the firſt outline of her new code of laws, a clauſe was inſerted which would have nearly emancipated the peaſantry: but it was ſoon found neceſſary to eraſe this clauſe, for the peace and ſafety of the nation. I will recommend to the Ruſſian nobles and gentry, landed proprietors, a mode of liberating their peaſantry which cannot be attended with any danger, or with any loſs to them. Let them put a price upon freedom; let them raiſe a mark for their peaſantry to ſtrive to gain by induſtry. Were it even 100l. per head, the peaſantry would ſoon emancipate themſelves, by only continuing the preſent permiſſion of entering into trade: the Ruſſians engaged in trade are not inclined to drunkenneſs to ſuch a degree as the common peaſant in the country, but more generally ſober and active.

Her Imperial Majeſty, in building the city of Sophia near the palace of Zarko

 Zelo,

Zelo, ſo called after her maiden name, which was changed to Catharine upon her marriage, deſigned to make this infant city an aſylum for the Ruſſian peaſantry who were oppreſſed by their lords, or who wiſhed for liberty. It was ſoon found, however, that none but the moſt profligate and idle came to inhabit Sophia; and that the peaſants conſidered Sophia only as the means of obliging their lords to agree to all their demands, by threatening to go there to reſide: the aſylum was conſequently ſhut up. One circumſtance, however, occurred, which points out an excellent plan for emancipating thoſe who really deſerve liberty. A Ruſſian peaſant had made a conſiderable fortune in trade; he offered his lord a price for his freedom; this was refuſed, the proprietor expecting, no doubt, to fleece the ſlave of all he was worth. The peaſant, though a new city was open for his reception, ſtill endeavoured to procure freedom by purchaſe. When every attempt failed he went to Sophia, where he now reſides; and at

preſent

present pays annually to government to the amount of several thousands sterling in duties for articles in which he traffics. The city of Sophia should still be a refuge for such, and for such only. Fix the price for freedom; give a slave a small property in land, or peculium, as among the Romans of old and our West India settlements at this day, with some time for cultivating it, and nothing more is wanting to every purpose—both that of humanity to the slave and justice to the master.

A common peasant, if he can make a shift to live and to pay his rent, has no other inducement to spur him to industry; and as that is done without much exertion, he falls into every vice of slavery. Hold up to him freedom, but not luxury, as a spur to industry. When this mark is fixed, their exertion to attain it will render them industrious; and this habit of industry will render them capable and deserving of freedom. They will have the more value for this that it has cost them dear, and naturally receive

ceive the idea, that, by a continuance of their induſtry they will beſt preſerve their liberties.

The landholders need not be in any terror that their eſtates will be deſerted by this emancipation of the ſlaves, if, when emancipated, they will give them ſmall farms at moderate rents, payable in money. The Ruſſians are, perhaps, more attached to their country than any people: they cannot all engage in trade, and a ſufficient number will become farmers when they can call their own what remains in their barns after paying their rent. Their active diſpoſitions incline them rather to commerce than agriculture, from the quick return of profit; but a Ruſſian will accommodate himſelf to any ſituation where he has a certainty of making money, which he has not in his preſent ſituation. And it would be more honourable to the Ruſſian nobility to be ſupported by revenues derived from the induſtry of freemen than from the labour of ſlaves; which, however, muſt of neceſſity be the caſe for ſome time longer: for ſlavery, after all,

what-

whatever hot-headed fanatics may ſay or write, is abſolutely one of the ſtages through which tribes and nations of men are deſtined to paſs into free and nobler ſyſtems.

Travellers into Ruſſia have deſcribed the ſervile demeanour of the Ruſſian ſlave, particularly in his mode of ſalutation, in bowing his head to the earth; and they ſeem to reſt upon this as a mark of a ſlaviſh mind. But we ſhould not judge of people by ſo vague a proof as a peculiar mode of ſalutation or compliment. The Ruſſian has as much meaning in this ſalute, as we have in ſubſcribing ourſelves the moſt humble ſervants of one another in letters. Beſides, a Ruſſian only obſerves this piece of politeneſs to his ſuperior, his commander, or one on whom he has immediate dependance: and, at the very time he is bowing himſelf, he familiarly calls them brothers, as they alſo call him if they were the greateſt princes in the empire. A Ruſſian ſeldom lifts his hat to any perſon above his own rank, unleſs he knows him, and depends in ſome degree upon his favour; but they are punctual in this

this common ſalute to thoſe of the ſame rank with themſelves: they are conſtantly bowing to one another, and a ſtranger who does not enquire farther conſiders all this as a proof of ſervility. A traveller, marching through Ruſſia, will receive more ſalutes of this kind from the peaſantry, if he is clothed in a ſheep-ſkin and a beard appending to his face, than if he were dreſſed in purple.

Theſe inſtances of their cuſtoms are proofs of a very noble ſpirit in the natives. I cannot help obſerving here, that the Ruſſian women are as elegant in their manner of ſaluting as the men are awkward: putting both hands upon their breaſt, they gently incline their head with the utmoſt grace and eaſe; and a cottage girl will acquit herſelf as handſomely as a ducheſs. Nature has given all the Ruſſian females a moſt bewitching manner of addreſs, which is in direct contraſt with the rough blunt male peaſant; who, except in the article of bowing, nearly reſembles the bear whoſe fur he wears. Mr. Wraxall, however, complained, that in his journey of 4000 miles, he could

could not obtain a ſingle kiſs from any of the ladies near the pole, unleſs from an old Swediſh ducheſs wanting teeth. This muſt have been owing to the haſty manner of amorous youth, ſince the Rev. Mr. Coxe gives us a minute detail of the regular approaches to the lips of the northern damſels; no doubt, for the inſtruction of thoſe of his countrymen who may viſit Scandinavia. The effect of climate and local cauſes upon men and manners is wonderful! Man ſeems to take the very complexion of his body from that of the earth where he is ſituated.

Yet even in thoſe frozen regions, they have found out a method, in ſome particulars, to counteract the the effect of climate. I have already obſerved, that the Ruſſians are not ſuch fools as to ſhiver, like many of our countrymen, under ſlight clothing even in the rigours of cold. The higher claſſes are wrapt cloſe in furs, the lower in woolly ſkins of ſheep; a kind of natural fleecy hoſiery, one of the moſt important articles of Britiſh manufacture, which was firſt

firſt brought into notice by the late Lord Heathfield, a philoſopher as well as a great military commander, not only as affording a moſt comfortable degree of warmth, but as a moſt efficacious remedy againſt rheumatiſm and the gout. The plan now in agitation, for diſſeminating knowledge, enterpriſe, and induſtry, at the northern and weſtern extremities of Britain, by tranſlating one of the COLLEGES at Aberdeen to Inverneſs, or perhaps Dingwall, and converting the empty building into a manufactory of the fine Scotch wool into garments of the fleecy hoſiery kind, ſo well adapted to northern latitudes, under the auſpices of the patentees of that uſeful invention, who are men of liberal minds, is highly worthy of all poſſible encouragement. The run from Aberdeen to the Baltic, where, and particularly at Peterſburg, the demand for fleecy hoſiery garments when once known will be great, is ſhort and eaſy.

The antient Scandinavians had not found out the art of heating their houſes by ſtoves, and the cold they ſuffered made them

chaſte

chaste in winter! All sublime historians, in prose and verse, have therefore represented chastity as cold, and dressed her in virgin snow and icicles. The poets slated the temple of Diana with pieces of ice. The Russian cabins are so many hot-houses, which added to their baths, have created in both sexes the most amorous dispositions: and they cohabit together at as early an age as the natives of Indostan.

The Germans, Danes, Swedes, and Norwegians, having likewise the stove, preserve the summer heat in the bleak months, and are fond husbands and gallants all the year. Britons are moulded by other causes: without stoves, without clothing, no nation suffers so much from cold. It is surprising, then, that we are not as famous for our chastity as for our courage. Liberty is the stove which warms us! Liberty gives commerce—commerce, wealth—wealth, luxury—and luxury, an amorous complexion.

As the Russian peasant is bound to the estate, the estate is no less bound to him. Every Russian landholder must pay his

taxes to government, and maintain them, by giving the ruftics a fufficient portion of land. The proprietor, no doubt, exacts a rent; but fometimes the peafant ufes the freedom to drink his crop, and the lord has no recourfe but to the whip. A Ruffian peafant of the genuine breed, will rifk a beating at any time, for a pint of brandy.

It has been obferved, that the natural difpofition of men is beft difcovered when they are in liquor. If this be the cafe, I can teftify the good temper of the Ruffians. When they are drunk they continue kiffing one another, untill they turn fober. Their lips are in conftant motion, either emptying the bottle, finging, or preffing the mouths of their bearded brothers. The ladies too, *of the lower claffes*, fometimes indulge in libations to Bacchus!—However overpowered they may be, male or female, by the juice of barley, they never neglect to crofs themfelves when they come near to a church. The Ruffians, like the great men of other nations, leave their religion in the hands of the priefts, and pay them for

taking

taking charge of it. The clergy read the ſervice and ſing hymns, joined by a choſen band of choriſters. The audience attend in reſpectful ſilence. The prieſts read the ſervice with expedition, as if they were afraid that the audience ſhould underſtand it; and indeed if one diſtinct word reach the ear of any of the congregation, they have reaſon to be proud of their quick hearing.

A Ruſſian contents himſelf if he is a good man, with his good works: his religious duties conſiſt in croſſing himſelf. When he comes out of doors in the morning, the firſt thing he does is to croſs himſelf, turning towards any church within ſight, or to the ſound of any bell within hearing. When he eats or drinks, he croſſes himſelf before and after meals. When he lets his ſledge for hire, he croſſes himſelf upon receiving the fare. When he begins a journey, when he enters any houſe, when any thing remarkable occurs, as being informed of the death of a relation or acquaintance, a thunder ſtorm, or whatever ſuddenly ſtrikes his attention, he croſſes himſelf. The Ruſſian

 beggars,

beggars, of whom indeed, there are few in Ruſſia, as every eſtate maintains its peaſantry, have the moſt ſolemn manner of croſſing themſelves, and the moſt intereſting humility of demeanour in aſking charity, that can be imagined. Upon a holy-day, they place themſelves before the churches, upon their knees, even when the ground is covered with ſnow, and the cold winds howling around them. In this poſture, bowing their head to the earth, and croſſing their breaſts with fervour, they call upon the name of Chriſt, and humbly implore the charitable mite. If the paſſenger beſtows this, the ſupplicant bleſſes him; if he refuſes, he alſo bleſſes him.

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LETTER XXIV.

Soil of the Province of Ingria.—Preſent State of Agriculture.—Economy of the Peaſantry.—Anecdotes of the Grand Duke Paul Petrovitſch—his Attempt to emancipate the Peaſants.—German Colonies for the Improvement of Agriculture.--Anecdote of a Samoeide Member of the Ruſſian Parliament.

Ingria, Auguſt 1790.

PERHAPS it is in every reſpect for the benefit of the Ruſſian empire, that the capital is ſituated in a barren province. Peterſburg acts upon the empire as a foreign country, and keeps the whole in motion, in ſupplying her demands.

The ſoil of Ingria is a white ſandy clay, which is deemed the pooreſt of all the ſorts of earths; yet here, by the kind providence

dence of nature, it is made to produce abundant crops, when properly cultivated. This flat country receives upon its bosom an even covering of snow during winter; and this, in the spring, melting, distributes moisture to the lands, with the same equality. But this snow now serving for manure, would prove the destroyer of the soil were the lands hilly. The thaw in spring would, in this case, occasion a run of water, which would carry along with it that moisture which the soil now retains, as well as its richest particles. Upon the other hand, were the soil of Ingria of a rich nature, this flat surface of the lands, when the snow melted, would reduce it to a mortar, and render it useless, since so short a summer's sun would not exhale the over-abundant moisture. The sandy soil drains itself, yet the flat surface of the land makes it retain a sufficient quantity of sap.

The rye harvest is finished: it is later this year than the last, owing to the wet season. Rye is the golden grain of the north: the peasants do not sow much of any other kind of corn. Of this grain they make their bread,

bread, and their drink too: rye ſteeped in water gives them their favourite draught. The culture of their rye differs very little from that of the wheat in Britain; it is ſown in autumn, after ſummer fallow. The winter ſnow protects it from the ſeverity of the froſt. Of oats and barley ſmall quantities only are ſown, and they are ſeldom reaped in a perfect ſtate. The ſummer is ſhort, and when attended, which it generally is, with heavy rains, the harveſt is retarded. The oats and barley are then cut green, and dried in their barns with ſtoves as in the iſles and highlands of Scotland. The rye, under the ſame circumſtances, is treated in the ſame manner. The proceſs is very ſimple: the grain, with its ſtraw, is placed upon rafters in the barn, and a ſtove heated beneath them. A few hours only is requiſite to dry the grain in ſo hot an oven, and a new quantity is brought, until the whole crop is dried. The Ruſſian diſtillers uſe all ſorts of grain. The oats are raiſed chiefly for their horſes.

The poor people, in ſummer, cannot afford to live upon beef; and the fiſh, at this

ſeaſon, are dearer, too, than in winter. The peaſantry, as ſubſtitutes, uſe vegetables, eſpecially the cucumber, which they eat with black bread. The cucumber peculiar to this climate is ſmaller than the Engliſh kind: it is cultivated in every garden, in vaſt quantities; and every cottage has a cucumber plantation belonging to it. They are now ſelling at five copics, or about two pence per hundred! The peaſants either eat them when newly cut, or pickled; and one ſeldom ſees a Ruſſian in ſummer without a bit of black bread in one hand, and a cucumber in the other.

The pickled cucumber is prepared in this manner: a layer of oak leaves is firſt put in the bottom of a caſk, then a layer of cucumbers, and ſo alternately, until the caſk is filled. A pickle is then made in the common way, with ſalt and water (care being taken that it is not too ſtrong), and poured into the caſk over the cucumbers. It is only neceſſary to keep the caſk in a cool cellar, and the cucumber is ſoon ready for uſe, and keeps twelve months, or longer, in good

condition.

condition. Strangers do not, at firſt, reliſh this arctic pickle; yet they ſoon become fond of it, and eat it with all ſorts of viands. I imagine, if a proportion of vinegar were added to the ſalt, this diſh would be the more wholeſome. The Ruſſians, from their liking to ſalt meſſes, are very ſcorbutic in their habits.

The Ruſſian and Finland peaſants pickle other roots in the ſame way.

The cabbage is another grand article in the Ruſſian œconomy. Large tubs are filled with this plant, cut down in ſmall ſhreds; upon this cold water is poured, and the cabbage ſteeped until it ſours: the water is then taken off, and the operation is completed. This is done in Auguſt and September, while the weather is yet warm enough to aſſiſt in the fermentation. The caſks are put into cellars, and the cabbage is frozen during the cold weather, ſo that, when wanted for uſe, it muſt be cut with a hatchet. It muſt be thawed in cold water, and thereafter, a ſoup is made of it with meats.

Any kind of frozen ſubſtances put into

warm water, or near any thing hot, inſtantly putrifies; and the Ruſſians are very careful in the management of this winter proviſion, upon which they greatly depend.

The peaſantry having laid in a proper quantity of rye meal, ſalted cucumber, and ſour cabbage, bid defiance to the nine months of winter. They procure, too, at this ſeaſon, from the market, frozen fiſh and meat, in ſuch quantities as their circumſtances may permit. Their cattle are the worſt provided for in the long dreary ſeaſon, from October to May; and this is owing more to the lazineſs of the peaſantry than to the want of a ſufficient quantity of graſs, if they would be at the trouble to cut it in due time, and to lay it up in the ſame good order that they do their own proviſions.

The peaſants not only make preparations of cabbage for their own conſumption, but for that of the great towns. It is common to ſee ſeveral hundred ſledges, with as many tubs of ſour cabbage, driven to Peterſburg. The boors, in returning from town, ſeat themſelves in the tubs, and look like ſo many diſciples of Diogenes.

Every

Every peaſant is allowed a certain portion of land for the purpoſe of agriculture, and a conſiderable ſpace of woodland is granted to the villagers, in common, for feeding their herds and flocks, and to ſupply winter provender for the beaſtial. They pay their lords in money and in ſervice; ſometimes partly in grain. The exactions of the lords are arbitrary. The Ruſſians and Fins are both of them very indolent farmers; yet, the firſt are as lively and active, as the others are naturally dull and ſluggiſh. The Ruſſians, naturally ſpirited and quick in all their paſſions, are not well calculated to wait the ſlow returns of harveſt; and the want of population, in a wide fertile country, is unfavourable to exertion.

The hot ſtoves would of themſelves occaſion all their indolence, did no other cauſe exiſt; and their lively tempers, that muſt be employed in ſome way, make them drunkards. They do not drink to warm themſelves becauſe they are cold, or to drown melancholy becauſe they are ſlaves; but to occupy, nouriſh, heighten, and prolong the natural ardour and vivacity of their minds.

The

The Tongufian hunters fuffer more cold than any people, and they are the fobereft of any. The lower order of Englifhmen drink as much as thofe of Ruffia, only they differ in their manner of drinking.—The Ruffian fwallows as much at once as ferves him for fome hours; the Englifhman fips continually, and talks politics over his bottle. Now, it is wonderful that the Ruffians fhould drink becaufe they are flaves, and Britons becaufe they are free! A Briton fhould never get drunk, left he forget, but for a moment, that he is free; or have wild ideas, inftead of fober reality.

I do not pretend to fay, that freedom and fecurity of property are inimical to induftry; they are the parents of induftry and every noble exertion. But I will prove that, were the Ruffians at this moment free, they would be lefs induftrious, and have more vices than they have at prefent, if that freedom were given them before they are prepared for it.

I will content myfelf juft now with giving one or two glaring inftances of the ftubbornnefs of ignorance.

Slaves

Slaves will complain of hardſhips, and pant after liberty, without knowing their incapacity for enjoying freedom. It is only for thoſe, who are capable of freedom, that we ſhould be ſorry if they remain in a ſtate of bondage! The complaints of the peaſantry, upon ſome eſtates of the Grand Duke, reached his Highneſs. He ordered them to be put upon the ſame footing with Engliſh farmers, exacting a trifling rent, providing them with every implement of huſbandry, and giving them inſtructors to teach them agriculture. The peaſants made ſhift to ſell their new property, and drink the value in the courſe of two years: they failed to pay even the trifling ſtipulated rent, and petitioned to be put upon their old eſtabliſhment.

The new code of laws, before it was publiſhed, was reported to contain a very ſtrange kind of freedom; and the more diſtant from the metropolis, the more ridiculous were the notions entertained of that freedom. The peaſantry were impreſſed with an idea, that they were to have the *freedom* of *enſlav-*

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ing their lords, or to force them to do whatever they required; and they began to put the *law* in execution, by murdering ſeveral proprietors of eſtates.

The Ruſſians are a fine people, but they are not yet ripe for freedom. Their ſovereigns are doing every thing in their power to prepare them for liberty, by inuring them to induſtry and good habits; and this is all that the ſober and wiſe advocates for liberty can wiſh for. There are many inſtances of the unneceſſary oppreſſion of the peaſantry; but this is neither the fault of the ſovereign nor of the proprietors, farther than that the proprietors ſhould be more careful than they ſometimes are, in appointing overſeers on their eſtates. Theſe are the tyrants who bring odium upon government, and upon the Ruſſian nobles; and there ſhould be ſome regulations adopted, to prevent men without character or feeling, from having it in their power to diſgrace their country. But while we allow theſe evils to exiſt, it will eaſily occur, that ſo ſenſible a people as the Ruſſians, yet untaught,

taught, and having passions of consequence wild and furious, are not yet to be kept under, but by a steady, and even a severe hand.

I have witnessed the dismission of tyrannical overseers of land, on several occasions. When the proprietors know of the evil, it is their interest to cure it. Both lord and peasant ought to be the happiest people upon the earth. Russia is extensive and fruitful, and the taxes, in times of peace, very moderate. The natives are capable of every improvement in arts and science. Time will remove temporary advantages which all other nations have had in their turn.

In the province of Ingria, and in the neighbourhood of Petersburg, are colonies of German farmers, formerly established by her Imperial Majesty. Their farms are proofs of what industry can effect even in the latitude of 60 deg. They raise very fine rye crops, and they supply the metropolis with all sorts of vegetables, as cabbages, carrots, turnips, potatoes, &c. The adja-

cent

cent city gives them plenty of manure, of which they uſe too much. They ſeem to conſider the quantity, rather than the quality of their crops; and the potatoes in particular, which ſhould be excellent in a ſandy ſoil, are ſpoiled by the heaps of manure thrown upon the land. This is very much to be regretted, as this root would be a more wholeſome food for the natives than their ſalted cucumbers; and it might gradually draw off their taſte for that exceſs of raw vegetables which they devour continually. Thoſe German colonies are eſtabliſhed in many other parts of the empire, and their example will, in time, excite the Ruſſian peaſants to follow agriculture with more attention and induſtry.

But the Ruſſian, with every local evil and diſadvantage, is inactive only in affairs of agriculture: in trade he is a very different perſon; and from this I am very apt to think that their property is not ſo inſecure as ſome, who are more attentive to the names of liberty and vaſſalage than to matters of fact, would perſuade us. Nor are his

greater exertions in trade than in agriculture occasioned by a taste for the pleasures of luxury. The Russian trader, as yet, deals in luxuries without tasting them, brandy always excepted; his only object being to gain money. The new code of laws has put the people upon a very different footing from what they were on formerly; and the natives, when employed in trade, or other concerns which demand quick application, and are attended with quick returns of profit, do not appear to be affraid of getting rich. It is diverting to hear the two accounts given of the Russians, by those at one thousand miles distance: the sage philosopher in his closet—and the mercantile foreigner who resides in Russia. The first, oppressing the natives with chains and knouts, and every load of misery and woe, renders them stupified, sullen, and careless; the second complains, that the natives are as sharp as himself, and that very little advantage can be got over them in any dealings; but on the contrary, that the Russians have no aversion to over-reaching when in their power;

and as they do this in a lefs polite and fly manner than polifhed nations, the proofs againft them are clearer, and the complaints louder than they might be otherwife.

In forming the new code of laws, her Imperial majefty fummoned, from every part of the empire, deputies to affift her councils. When the Samoeide deputies came in their turn to be queftioned in regard to what new regulations were neceffary in their country, they replied, " that they " had few laws, and did not require more; " that if any one put another to death, he, " likewife, was punifhed with death:" they were afked " if they had no other criminals " amongft them—no thieves, no adulterers?" They anfwered, " that there were fuch among " them." " What then," rejoined their interrogators, " are the punifhments annexed " to the crimes of theft and adultery?" " What!" faid one of the reverend deputies, ftarting with furprife, " is not detection a fufficient punifhment!"

LETTER XXV.

Cuſtoms and Manners of the Finlanders.—Contraſt of Character between the Ruſſians and Finlanders.—Character of the Ruſſians.—Native Politeneſs and Goodnature.—Anecdote of a Ruſſian Soldier—of a Ruſſian Sheriff.

Ingria, November 1790.

NO two nations differ more from each other than the Ruſſians and Finlanders. The former are as active, acute, and ſenſible, as the latter are ſlow, heavy, and ſtupid. Both are nearly in the ſame ſituation in regard to freedom, or rather in regard to ſlavery: both are under the ſame climate. This proves that there is a difference in the very nature of men, which neither local ſituation nor climate is able wholly to eradicate.

The poor Finlanders, toſſed about from one maſter to another, hardly know to whom they belong: the Ruſſians, as their conquerors, claim the ſuperiority; and a Ruſſian peaſant, in compariſon with the Finlander, deems himſelf a gentleman. The apparent ſlowneſs and ſtupidity of the Finlanders may be partly occaſioned by a degrading treatment. My propoſal of removing them to the province of the Ukraine, would put this numerous and induſtrious nation more upon a level with the Ruſſians; and, if they actually poſſeſs abilities, a ſituation more independent will bring them forth. This plan would be of great ſervice to the Ruſſians. The contemplation of a people ſo much inferior to them, as the Finlanders are at preſent, leads them to ſuppoſe themſelves more accompliſhed in manners and arts, than the world is yet willing to allow them to be.

Civilization is beſt promoted by example. The beſt books of laws, manners, and ſciences, ſent among uncivilized nations, tranſlated into their native language, would hardly excite

excite their notice; or, if they did, probably their contempt or derifion. But when foreign nations mix with them, when they fee theory reduced to practice, and the fuperior wealth of the ftrangers, they begin to exert themfelves to equal the others in arts, which they are now convinced is the fure road to affluence. The Britifh nation is copied by all others, becaufe it is the richeft; which naturally makes foreign nations conclude that thofe arts which procure fuperior riches, are themfelves fuperior to the arts of other ftates.

When the Ruffians fee the wealth of a people, whom they at prefent defpife, increafed by means of induftry, and the adoption of arts common to both; when they find the Finlanders approaching to equality with themfelves, they will be convinced of the neceffity of adopting the arts and fciences of foreign nations in order to maintain their boafted pre-eminence over the Finlanders. The Ruffians have already the example of foreign nations; but they have not long had it, and that only from a

few as yet reſident with them; and when their pride as well as their intereſt is brought into play, their motions and improvements will be more rapid. The Finlander, ſituated as he is, remains quiet, and cautious of giving any offence; this caution and quietneſs have produced in him a conſiderable ſhare of low cunning. I do not recollect to have ſeen a Finlander in a paſſion: low murmurs are the utmoſt ſtretch of their feelings. A Ruſſian, though he does not repel, ſhrinks from inſult, and gives vent, the firſt opportunity, to his curſes, when his tyrant is out of hearing, but without paying any regard who may hear him beſide. In this inſtance he reſembles a woman: he makes up in words, what he dares not in blows; and frequently, too, his tears are ſummoned to the aid of his ſpeech. The tears of a Ruſſian ſtart from him indignantly, and give even a greater manlineſs to his looks. A Finlander hangs his head, weeps, whines, and complains like a child.

The Finlander being deemed, and even deeming himſelf, inferior to the Ruſſian, copies

copies after him in manners, but particularly in wearing the beard: and no doubt he means this too as a diſguiſe, to loſe, in dreſs and manners, the odious diſtinction which otherwiſe would fall more ſeverely upon him.

Their religion does not enjoin wearing the beard, and it muſt certainly be for the purpoſes I have already hinted at, that the Finlander wears it. Thoſe of this nation who ſtill remain under the Swediſh government, univerſally ſhave the beard. The Ruſſians, emigrants from finer climates, add the ſheep-ſkin to their other clothes in winter. The Finlanders, the natives of the polar regions, are more hardy in this reſpect. A Finlander ſeldom wears the ſheep-ſkin, though his dreſs be, in other reſpects, nearly ſimilar to the Ruſſian: it conſiſts of a coarſe pair of linen drawers, which ſerve both for breeches and ſtockings. Their legs are wrapped, beſides, with pieces of linen or woollen ſtuff, rolled about with ſtraw ropes; and they have ſtraw ſhoes upon their feet. Their coat is of coarſe

woollen ftuff, of a dark brown or white colour, made without regard to fhape, and is tied round the body with a band.

The Fin's beard defends the lower part of his face, and a fur cap his head, from the cold; and he ties a handkerchief round his neck. The Ruffian's drefs differs from this chiefly in his expofing his neck to cold and heat, and wearing leather boots inftead of ftraw ftockings. I have obferved that the Finlanders, in one inftance, feeming to forget their defire of blending themfelves with Ruffians, wear univerfally a red cape to their coats. But let a Finlander be ever fo near in drefs to the Ruffians, I can pick him out from among the crowd of the latter: not only his locks betray him, but his inanimate figure, which feems to move by outward rather than inward impulfe. White locks, common to the Danes, the Norwegians, the Swedes, and Finlanders, prove them the moft antient inhabitants of the countries they now live in, and probably of the fame origin. I do not underftand much either of the Finland or the Swedifh dialect; but, if

my ears do not deceive me, they are nearly ſimilar, not only in many of the words, but in the manner of ſpeaking: both people have a plaintive tone in their pronunciation.

The Finlander imitates with ſucceſs the dreſs of the Ruſſians; a ſtranger is not ſenſible of the difference between the two people: he finds great difficulties, however, in his attempt to be as cheerful as his conquerors. A Ruſſian ſings from morning till night, unleſs when he is paying away money. A Finlander never tunes his throat, unleſs when he is drunk, and then he roars, without regard to muſic: he catches, perhaps, a tune from ſome paſſing Ruſſian, but he forgets it again in a few minutes. I wondered, at my firſt arrival here, to hear ſuch a mixture of good and bad muſic upon the highways. I now find who were the *baſe* performers. A Finlander pulls off his hat to every perſon who appears like a gentleman: a Ruſſian ſeldom, unleſs to his brothers in ſheep-ſkins.

The Finland women are extremely coarſe in their perſons and features. They wear

 a ſtrange

a ſtrange kind of dreſs, ornamented with embroidery of different coloured threads, and hung in every corner with glaſs beads, which are even wrought into the cloth. They are even fond too of gold and ſilver ornaments, and have each a ſilver gorget upon their breaſts; but this is their holiday dreſs; in ordinary, it differs little from that of the men. The married women tie up their hair, and wear upon their heads a ſmall hood of linen; the unmarried women allow their hair to fall upon their ſhoulders, and have ſometimes a gaudy head-dreſs, compoſed of a bit of paſteboard or other ſtiff ſubſtance, ſtudded with beads, or ſparkling with lace. This laſt piece of finery encircles but does not cover their heads. In this laſt article of dreſs they appear to have copied after the Ruſſian females, whoſe habits, I have already obſerved, bear a ſtrong reſemblance to that of the women in the highlands of Scotland; yet the dreſs of the Ruſſian men does not, in the ſmalleſt degree, reſemble that of the Highlander: indeed, neither of them wear breeches; but the

Ruſſian

Ruſſian long trowſers have no ſimilarity to the philibeg. The dreſs of the Ruſſian is long, flowing, and warm.—The highlander's, the plaid excepted, ſhort and ſcanty.

The inhabitants in many countries under the line, are not more tawny than the Finland men and women, at an advanced, and even at a middle period of life. The extreme cold of the polar winter, not leſs than the hot ſtoves and baths, and the ſultry ſummer, produces this effect, with the aſſiſtance of their dirty habits. The Ruſſians, particularly the women, have a ſpirit of cleanlineſs, in defiance of their general cuſtoms, which are inconſiſtent with it. But the Finlanders, when old, retire as it were amidſt filth itſelf; their forms are encruſted with naſtineſs; and indeed the human form, amongſt them, is nearly loſt. When young, their colour is rather delicate; their ſnowy hair ſpreads upon their ſhoulders, and they would ſeem to promiſe more agreeable perſons in old age. The Ruſſians have dark hair and complexions from infancy, though many of the Ruſſian women have not only fair

fair complexions, but delicate ſhapes, which, added to their enchanting demeanour, render them irreſiſtibly charming.

Beauty among the Finlanders is rarely found. I have nevertheleſs ſeen ſome perfect models of beauty among the females, which their awkward manner and dreſs could not hide; for the Finland ladies have not the native politeneſs of the Ruſſian, and when they are polite, their politeneſs is copied from the latter. I have in vain attempted to diſcover what the Finlander inherits from nature, unleſs a ſoft diſpoſition, which is entirely moulded by the actions of thoſe cauſes already mentioned.

I find no difficulty in drawing the portrait of the Ruſſian: he inherits a ſoul that darts its light through the miſt, which hides rather than mixes with it. I have before taken notice of the inclination of the Ruſſians for fun and merriment. They catch at every ludicrous circumſtance; but I never ſaw a people ſo goodnatured, and ſo polite withal. A Ruſſian laughs, if it appears to him that you wiſh to make him laugh; and every

every peaſant contrives to excite laughter in his neighbour: but they ſeldom laugh at any incident, however ludicrous, if it is occaſioned by miſtake, and particularly if the miſtake is attended with any uneaſy circumſtances to the perſon who makes it. I have often admired their behaviour to foreigners who attempted to ſpeak the Ruſſian language. In many other nations, and moſt I believe among our own countrymen, nothing affords ſuch diverſion as the blunders committed by ſtrangers in ſpeaking their language, and even in companies who wiſh to be eſteemed polite. A Ruſſian boor, if addreſſed by a ſtranger, looks anxiouſly at him, and is uneaſy for his errors; he encourages you to make ſigns, to aſſiſt him in gueſſing your meaning; he even inſtructs you to make them; and having gueſſed your meaning, which he does very quickly, he is very happy, and flies to procure what you want. A Ruſſian is not ſo quick in underſtanding his native language, when he is deſired to do what he knows he will be forced to do. He is, at that time,

as

as ſlow and ſtupid as a Finlander. But where he knows he is to procure thanks, and, in many inſtances, when he can expect nothing but thanks, he is fond of obliging. A Ruſſian accuſtomed to obey, is equally fond of being obeyed, when he is in the leaſt degree in authority, or where he is certain of being in the right.

It will appear ſtrange to you, who have heard nothing from Ruſſia but ſounds of dungeons, chains, and knouts, to read theſe new ſketches of their cuſtoms and character, which I do aſſure you are drawn from life; and their vices and virtues, their faults and excellencies, recorded as they occurred to my obſervation.

A Ruſſian coachman, ſome time laſt ſummer, drove me into the capital: a retinue of ſome great man was coming from it, and, keeping upon the left hand ſide of the road, my coachman called out to the poſtillion to keep to the right: the road was the beſt to the left; ſo that the great man's poſtillions, truſting that their magnificent ſhow would awe us into complaiſance, kept their ground;

my coachman poured upon them a volley of oaths; the poſtillions drove to the other ſide; the great man ſtared, and perhaps miſtook me for another great man from the impudence of my ſervant. We paſſed to windward of this nobleman and his ſuite, and involved the orders of St. George and St. Waldemar in a cloud of duſt. I reprimanded the coachman for behaving ſo inſolently. He repeated his oaths, and ſaid, "that every perſon ſhould keep to the right "hand," and then continued his ſong.

I was much pleaſed lately with the behaviour of a ſoldier of a Ruſſian regiment which, in their march, halted in our neighbourhood, in order to procure freſh horſes for their baggage waggons. The ſheriff of the diſtrict, who is a god among the peaſantry, arrived at the poſt-houſe, and ſent his ſtaroſts or meſſengers into the villages to find a ſupply of cattle and boors. The corporal of the advanced guard complained that the number brought in was not ſufficient. The ſheriff told him, "that he would order him to be "tied and whipped, if he dared to give direc-

"tions or opinions." The ſon of Mars, in one of corporal Trim's attitudes, replied ſharply, "that he had a title to ſpeak." The ſheriff aſked him, "if he knew whom "he talked to?" "Yes," ſaid the corporal, "it is your duty to collect horſes, and "mine to ſee that the number is ſufficient "for our company." The ſheriff ſtormed, and, beſtowing the accuſtomary oaths, repeated the various dignities of his office. The corporal aſſerted, "that he was as good "as him; that he was a ſoldier, had fought "for his country, and was bound to obey "his officers only." The magiſtrate and captain lowered his tone, though he was more than half ſeas over. But that he might keep up his authority and reſpect among the peaſantry, who had liſtened to the diſpute, he ordered two or three of them to be whipped, under pretence of their having been dilatory in coming up with their cavalry. I witneſſed this whipping. I had never ſeen the operation before in Ruſſia by public ſentence. If the execution is always ſo gentle as it was in the

present case, too much has been said about it by travellers. The peasants, one after the other, placed upon their hands and knees, received a few strokes from the starost, with a small wand, upon their backs. The deputy sheriff, or lieutenant, is a German nobleman, a man of the most polite and gentle manners, very unfit for his present post, but very capable of a better and more exalted rank. He avoids assuming his titles. The Finland peasants have no respect for him, as he seldom orders them to be beat. They are not like the Russian peasants, sensible of favours of this nature: yet, to say truth, both of them require to be kept in order by a strict hand: the Russian is very sensible of obligations and kind usage; but he is apt to abuse favour, and form expectations incompatible with his present situation. He has, as yet, no idea of the nature of freedom, otherwise than that it is permission to do every thing without the fear of blows.

The deputy sheriff shrinks when he is under the necessity of ordering punishment; he

he does not ſeem to think the puniſhment unneceſſary, but his gentle ſoul regrets that he muſt ſee the execution of juſtice.

He lives in a ſmall wooden houſe at Oranienbaum with an old mother and a ſiſter. His pay does not exceed 50l. a year; yet he appears cheerful, and ſtruggles to conceal his ſorrows from the world. His brother officers complain, that they cannot truſt him in any matter that requires a ſevere executioner.

LETTER XXVI.

Ruſſian Climate.—Of the hot and cold Baths, their ill Effects upon the Conſtitution of the Natives.—The Ruſſians enabled to bear Cold by warm Furs alone.—Phyſical and moral Effects of the Baths.

Ingria, Jan. 1791.

MANKIND were firſt placed in a fine climate: they have to this day an averſion to burning ſuns and chilling froſts; nor do I believe that they made choice of theſe latitudes where the extremes are felt, particularly of cold, or that any neceſſity would have driven them to the poles. I rather imagine that the climates have altered, and that a gradual alteration in theſe, has reconciled the inhabitants to rigours otherwiſe unſupportable.

It may be urged, Why are not other animals as well as man found here, the ſame as in other countries, and for the ſame reaſons?

It has been nearly proved by naturaliſts,

that the elephant, now only found in warm latitudes, was once a native of Siberia. That the animals of warm and hot climates do not now exiſt in the north, may be owing to the want of thoſe reſources againſt cold, which the ingenuity of men found out.

I think I view the ſagacious monarch of the woods retiring with ſlow and ſullen ſteps from the northern deſerts—hear him growling with agony as he aſcends the mountains of Tibet, and caſting back a wiſhful eye to his native plains!

A celebrated writer (Mr. Pallas) has given up his former opinion regarding the exiſtence of the elephant in Siberia; and now thinks, from the ſituation in which their bones are found, that the flood has waſhed them thither from India, after the animals had been deſtroyed. The marine ſtrata covering theſe bones, no doubt prove, too, that theſe animals were not natives of Siberia. Is it not poſſible that they may have been drowned here as well as in India?

Whether the generations of the north have made choice of their ſituation or no, they ſeem to be well pleaſed with it; for they

they are always ſinging or dancing, when they are not eating and drinking, or ſleeping.

It is a generally received opinion, that the hot and cold baths uſed by the northern nations harden and ſteel their conſtitutions againſt the ſeverity of the climate; and the writers upon the northern climates tell us, that the human body, by plunging from the hot to the cold bath, is tempered like iron: but, perhaps, what may temper iron may not temper fleſh and blood.

The rapid change from ſummer to winter, the only ſeaſons they know, they rehearſe upon their bodies, by plunging from the hot to the cold baths; like criminals, who, doomed to receive yearly a cruel flogging, daily flog themſelves to harden their backs.

I apprehend, however, from ſome little knowledge of the people, that theſe human furnaces, and ice cellars, have a contrary tendency. Nature hates extremes; nor is it to be brought by violent, but by ſlow degrees to endure them. The hardineſs acquired is onlyartificial, and conſiſts merely in ſuffering an operation with eaſe, which others could not bear at all.

The quick tranſitions of the northern climate form themſelves a natural bath. It might be more prudent to endeavour to evade the foe, than to brave him.

A bath moderately heated in winter, is abſolutely neceſſary in Ruſſia, to preſerve health; and, what is very much connected with health, to preſerve cleanlineſs. The natives content themſelves with boiling and freezing their bodies once a week; and, truſting to this ablution, they care not how dirty they are for the remainder of it. In fact, the baths, as they now uſe them, occaſion dirtier habits than if they never uſed them; for, in this caſe, they might find the neceſſity of wearing clean linen, and other parts of dreſs, as well as of waſhing their hands and faces; and the heat of ſummer would drive them into the rivers.

The cooling ſtream, ſo much celebrated by all nations for the purpoſes of health, has no charms in the eyes of a Ruſſian: he uſes it indeed, but in an unnatural way. The ſtoves in the houſes of the common people, are always heated to a degree little ſhort of that of the hot bath, without regard

to

to the ſeaſon; and, unleſs when the trial of hardihood comes on, they are in a conſtant ſtew.

They ſet cold and heat at defiance in the baths, and yet never go without doors in cold weather, unleſs when wrapped up in furs, which enables foreigners to go out too, as well as the natives. Now, if the Ruſſian cannot bear cold with leſs clothing than foreigners, does not this prove the inefficacy of the baths? Nay, foreigners bear with more cold than the Ruſſians, and with a dreſs leſs warm, at their firſt arrival here, and until their conſtitutions are weakened by the uſe of ſtoves, ill regulated in their heat.

The ſheep-ſkin is of vaſt ſervice to the back of a Ruſſian. It is this, not he, that withſtands the rigour of the climate; his very face is defended by a ſhaggy beard.

I am far from meaning to inſinuate that the Ruſſians are not of a hardy race; I only lament that they hurt a natural ſtrength and vigour of body, by uſing unnatural methods to increaſe them. The children of the Ruſſians chiefly are to be admired for undergoing the trial of the hot and cold bath; many however fall victims to this infernal

practice. A few months uſe to thoſe who paſs the ordeal, reconciles them to it: a few years uſe renders the bath neceſſary to their exiſtence; and at laſt it becomes their greateſt luxury—as among the higher claſſes of men to eat and drink ſubſtances of the hotteſt nature, and then to ſwallow ice creams to cool their burning ſtomachs. Nature at firſt rejects theſe poiſons; but at laſt yields, and even grows fond of her deſtroyer.

The eyes of a Ruſſian gladden with rapture when he ſpeaks of the bagnio; it is his *ne plus ultra* of mortal bliſs. In the hot bath they are treated nearly in the ſame voluptuous manner as in the baths of Aſia, from which quarter, indeed, all their cuſtoms ſeem to originate; but with this difference in favour of ſenſuality in Ruſſia, that the lower ranks ſometimes bathe together promiſcuouſly.

Before I ventured to truſt to my own obſervations concerning the effect of the hot and cold baths, I made particular enquiry among the moſt intelligent of the natives. They confeſſed that the immoderate uſe of the bath occaſioned ſeveral diſeaſes: they particularly mentioned the rheumatiſm. Mr. Pallas,

Pallas, in a converſation which I had with him upon this ſubject, corroborated this opinion. It is well known that the natives are ſoon cut off by illneſs, which I attribute to thoſe baths. All violent remedies have the effect of making us appear unexhauſted to the laſt moment: all nature is exhauſted to force ſymptoms of life: but the moment arrives when every fibre breaks, as at the ſignal of death, and down they are hurried to the grave. A Ruſſian has no fear of conſequences: he has little fear of any kind; and whatever happens, they ſay, as in Aſia, "It is the will of God!" When winter or when ſummer approaches, they only bring to their recollection what dreſs, what holidays, or what work is peculiar to the ſeaſon. They face, unconcernedly, heat or cold, yet prefer warmth; and would ſeem to encounter wintry ſtorms with the greater boldneſs, as they renew the pleaſure of a return to their cabins.

The face of a Ruſſian is defended by a ſhaggy beard; and thoſe who ſhave, tie a napkin round their cheeks in cold weather. From this cuſtom the Ruſſians might be called

 effeminate;

effeminate; as they are called hardy, from going with their necks bare. In both cafes we recognize the influence of cuftom.

The Ruffian recruit, taken from his warm hut and fheep-fkin, is in winter the moft pitiable creature upon earth. I have feen them frequently trembling in their march through the ftreets, and hardly able to hold their mufkets; while their countrymen, dreff-ed in furs, were walking about at their eafe. The foldier ufes the baths, but the virtue of thefe does not appear *unlefs under a fheep-fkin*: and he would prefer his old drefs to all the baths in Ruffia. This cruel treatment of the army muft occafion the death of thoufands annually. Could there be the leaft impropriety in giving them a winter drefs, lined with fur? though this might not be well adapted for regiments marching againft an enemy. Winter is a time when Ruffia will feldom be troubled with any attack. Nothing can withftand this rigorous climate but warm furs; and any attempt to do it in another manner would facrifice millions of lives. Humanity, as well

well as the beſt policy, calls upon the Ruſſian government to give a warmer dreſs to the ſoldiers in winter.

Early in ſummer, when the weather is no way intemperate, either in reſpect of heat or cold, the Ruſſians feel the approach of the evening, and quickly bury themſelves in fur, while foreigners are walking about in a ſlight dreſs. In truth, the latter are too careleſs in this reſpect, and the former if poſſible too careful.

At the beginning and at the cloſe of ſummer, this climate is liable to very ſudden tranſitions in the courſe of a few hours, and requires attention to proper clothing. The violent uſe of the hot and cold baths makes the bulk of Ruſſians ſickly; they have not the appearance of health: the women, in a greater degree than the men, have in their appearance every mark of debility and old age. Neither the one nor the other have that firmneſs of fleſh, that florid colour, that belong to the lower ranks of the Engliſh. The Ruſſian women endeavour to make up for theſe by painting their faces

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—a practice universal amongst them, from the Princess to the cinder-wench.

It is perhaps superfluous to observe, that those who, by the nature of their occupations, are most exposed to the cold, and have constant exercises, enjoy the best health: as the street Ishwoshics or coachmen, who are not much in their houses, and whose employment does not admit of their dozing like others, and sweating away their existence.

The moral effects arising from the violent use of the hot and cold baths, are as injurious to virtue and happiness as their physical operation is to bodily health.

The preservation of beauty and of health in women, preserves virtue in men. So soon as they lose these, they are no longer the enchanting objects of desire. The principle of pleasure is destroyed by the warm baths—at the same time that they nurture lascivious inclinations, and early prostitution. Hence indifference, inattention, disgust, and many crimes disgraceful to human nature.

LETTER XXVII.

Anecdote of M. Pleſtcheyeff.—General Deſcription of the Ruſſian Empire, its Produce and Commerce.—The Britiſh Commerce with Ruſſia ill conducted—Propoſal for tranſplanting the whole Nation of Finlanders to the Ukraine.—Population of Ruſſia.—Diſtinction of Ranks.

St. Peterſburg, February 1791.

I HAVE juſt returned from a viſit to M. Pleſtcheyeff, one of the braveſt officers, politeſt gentlemen, and accompliſhed ſcholars, in this part of the world. Pleſtcheyeff told me that he was for ſeven years on board the Britiſh fleet, and latterly held the rank of Lieutenant.

A picture in this gentleman's drawing-

room

room attracted my attention : it was the loſs of the Centaur on her paſſage from the Weſt Indies to England. Monſieur Pleſtcheyeff noticed ſeveral officers in the boat: "Theſe," ſaid he, "I am well acquainted "with." He mentioned their names, and particularly Captain Inglefield.

Monſ. Pleſtcheyeff is the author of a geographical account of the Ruſſian Empire, dedicated by permiſſion to Her Imperial Highneſs the Grand Ducheſs. It contains a very exact account of all the provinces, their extent, produce, &c. As we have no book in our language which treats of this ſubject, and as none are more capable, or could have written with greater accuracy than Monſ. Pleſtcheyeff, I ſhould wiſh to ſee a tranſlation of this work into Engliſh. This world of empire extends from the Dwina and Nieper, its weſtern boundaries, to Kamtſchatka and the eaſtern ocean, a length of four thouſand miles, and, from the arctic pole to the Euxine and the Caſpian ſeas, embraces one fourth part of the circumference of the globe. It has every

variety

variety of climate, and is inhabited by every variety of nations to be found in the old world, except the African *. Upon the coaſts of the northern ſeas, frozen during nine months of the year, the Laplanders, the Samoeides, the Oſtiacs, and various other tribes, dwell in tents and caves, little removed in civili-

* According to Linnæus, Buffon, and other naturaliſts, there are of mankind ſix different diviſions, or ſpecies:

The firſt, in the order of their enumeration, is found under the polar regions, and comprehends the Laplanders, the Eſquimaux Indians, the Samoied Tartars, the Nova Zemblians, Borandians, Greenlanders, and the people of Kamtſchatka.

The ſecond, the Tartar race, comprehending the Chineſe and Japaneſe.

The third, the Southern Aſiatics, or natives of India.

The fourth, the natives of Africa.

The fifth, the native inhabitants of America.

The ſixth, the Europeans.

It is needleſs to obſerve, that of theſe, and all the ſubordinate varieties or diviſions of nations, there has been a great intermixture: and diſtinctions, phyſical as well as moral, ſeem gradually, in ſome meaſure, to vaniſh before the progreſs of commerce, arts, and ſciences.

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zation from the brute creation: beyond these, towards the north, life itself goes out: the islands in the northern ocean are uninhabitable. The Siberians, a mixture of Fins and Tartars, inhabit the northern and middle regions of the Muscovite dominions in Asia. Their country is in many places fruitful; but as no part of it borders upon a navigable sea, its productions are of less value, and the people little known. The iron and furs of Siberia are the only articles which the Russian merchant finds as yet capable of bearing the expence of so long a conveyance to his warehouses at Petersburg.

The rivers of Siberia communicate with the Wolga; the Wolga, by lesser rivers and canals, with the Neva; but notwithstanding this convenience of water carriage, the vast distance renders it impracticable to bring any other but the most valuable articles of commerce to the ports upon the Baltic. The southern parts of Asiatic Russia are, in a proportionate degree, more fruitful than the middle provinces; but they labour

under

under the ſame diſadvantages in point of commercial intercourſe.

Siberia; with all theſe local inconvenien-ces, while her iron mines remain unexhauſt-ed, is an invaluable acquiſition to Ruſſia; and is a ſtrong barrier to the encroachments of the Chineſe and Tartars. The Ruſſian government is put to little expence in de-fending this barrier: a few ſmall forts, gar-riſoned by irregular troops from among the Coſſacs, who chiefly ſupport themſelves in fruitful and thinly inhabited plains, are at all times equal to the defence of this fron-tier.

Siberia is watered by many fine and na-vigable rivers, which afford a plentiful ſup-ply of fiſh to the natives; but as their ſtreams run towards the north, they are not attended with the advantage of a com-munication with a navigable ſea.

European Ruſſia has the Wolga upon the eaſt, the Caſpian and Black ſeas upon the ſouth, the Nieper and Dwina, before men-tioned, and the Baltic to the ſouth and weſt. The Wolga, riſing in the centre of this em-

pire,

pire, receiving in its courſe many rivers running from the Aſiatic as well as the European provinces, and diſcharging itſelf into the Caſpian ſea, lays open to the Ruſſian merchants India and Perſia. The Nieper and Dwina have their ſources in White Ruſſia, formerly a part of the kingdom of Poland. The Nieper empties his ſtream into the Black ſea, and from thence the navigation into every country bordering upon the Mediterranean is ſhort and eaſy. The Dwina, taking a contrary direction, runs into the Baltic, and with equal convenience opens a communication with France, Britain, Holland, and all the northern parts of Europe. It is to be remarked too, that theſe rivers have their ſources in the moſt fertile provinces, as they viſit the richeſt in their long courſe towards the eaſt, ſouth, and weſt, inviting the Ruſſians to induſtry, to agriculture and commerce.

The moſt conſiderable portion of this immenſe territory, in which are included the kingdoms of Kioff, Moſcow, Twere, and Novogorod; the province of the Cri-

mea, the Ukraine, Little and White Russias, and Livonia, is in the highest degree fertile, producing every species of corn, flax, hemp, and timber; from which last article tar is extracted: and from the better kinds is supplied that vast export of deal boards and masts from Petersburg, Wyburg, Narva, and Riga. These, and other species of Russian produce, employ yearly 1,000 sail of British shipping continually in exporting them. As yet we have only had samples of the produce of Russia.—Two thousand sail of British vessels may yet be employed in it; and several hundreds, perhaps thousands more of British factors, merchants, and others, may be profitably and usefully engaged, as well at the Russian sea-ports, as at the inland mercantile cities. I will illustrate this subject, when I come more particularly to treat of the Russian commerce. The few factors we have yet in this immense empire—their wealth, their consequent pride and obstinacy, have the effect of making the British importer pay upwards of 20 per cent. higher for his

goods, than if no ſuch monopoly exiſted; beſides ſubjecting our commerce with Ruſſia to numberleſs inconveniences, and even creating miſunderſtandings between the Engliſh and Ruſſians here, and likewiſe between the two courts.

The numerous herds, particularly of the Ukraine, ſupply the great quantities of tallow annually imported into Britain and other parts. So plentiful are proviſions in the Ukraine, that it is a common practice to kill bullocks, merely to obtain their hides and fat, which is procured by ſqueezing the whole carcaſe in a machine constructed for the purpoſe. What remains in the machine, after this operation, is thrown away, or uſed as manure. But indeed this paradiſe is ſo thinly peopled, that the farmers are not always at the trouble of ſpreading manure: they prefer removing to a new ſpot, which the plough has not yet torn, and has been rendered fertile by the rotting of ſucceſſive crops of tall graſs for centuries. The herds, although numerous, are unable to conſume one fiftieth part of the rich

rich clover produced in every ſpot; and it is trodden under foot, or ſet on fire, by vagrant hordes, or by indolent huſbandmen.

A celebrated writer recommends to the Ruſſian government, to people the Ukraine by tranſplanting thither the natives of the frozen ſhores of Siberia; "which," ſays he, "are of no ſervice either to themſelves or "to mankind in their preſent ſituation."

Experience has proved that the northern are, of all nations, the moſt attached to their country; and of all northern nations, the barbarous Laplander, and the inhabitants of the northern parts of Siberia, feel this *amor patriæ* the ſtrongeſt. They cannot exiſt out of their native deſerts. Every individual among them, who had been brought away by order of the Daniſh, Swediſh, or Ruſſian governments, actually died of grief. The moſt gentle treatment, the moſt flattering diſtinctions ſeemed to have no other effect, than to raiſe in their minds a ſad contraſt between luxury and politeneſs on the one hand, and rough but innocent homelineſs on the other. Why then envy them their icy

mountains and inclement ſkies? Nor is it good philoſophy to force them from all that makes them happy, though it were not attended with ſuch fatal conſequences. The only method to effect that plan, would be the cruel policy of depriving the parents of their children before they had yet imbibed a love of kindred, or their country. Might it not be better to tranſplant the whole nation of Finlanders from the ſhores of the Baltic? a nation already accuſtomed to agriculture, naturally induſtrious, and of diſpoſitions the very reverſe of thoſe of the more northern hordes, which make them abhor the idea of altering their ſimple, indolent manner of life. From what I know of the Finlanders, they might be eaſily prevailed upon to part with their rocks and ſand for the rich ſoil of the Ukraine.

It is true that Ruſſia, bound by former treaties to Sweden, cannot remove the Finlanders, without breaking through ſuch treaties: but they have made war upon each other, contrary to thoſe treaties; and to remove the Finlanders to the Ukraine,

would be the moſt reaſonable breach of faith that ever Ruſſia, or Sweden, or any other potentate or power, committed. The inclination of the Finlanders to agriculture, would make them prefer a country where they could live, to one where they may ſtarve. Had they no inclination to agriculture, it would be as difficult to tranſplant them as to tranſplant the Oſtiacs. The execution of this plan would, beſides, anſwer a grand political purpoſe—the Finlanders are attached to the Swedes, from ſimilarity in religion, and from being formerly the ſubjects of Sweden: Ruſſia therefore, by ſending the Fins to a better country, and replacing them with Ruſſians, would ſtrengthen her frontier, and likewiſe relieve the poor Finlanders from that jealouſy and ill uſage which they now ſuffer from petty tyrants in office, particularly in the time of war between Ruſſia and Sweden.

It might, beſides, baniſh every idea which Sweden does, or may entertain with regard to the recovery of Finland in Ruſſia, and thereby prevent thoſe conteſts which may henceforth originate from ſuch ideas.

The Ruſſian empire in Europe, conſiſting of the kingdoms and provinces enumerated, and ſituated for the moſt part in the beſt climates, is conſiderably larger than any other in this quarter of the globe, and daily increaſing in agriculture, population and commerce.

The population of Ruſſia, according to the laſt review and ſurvey, which was taken in 1788, amounted to upwards of twenty-one millions of ſouls: of which population the following is a

TABLE.

Inhabitants liable to the poll tax	18,000,000
— In the conquered provinces	1,200,000
Nobles — — —	70,000
Clergy, ſecular and regular —	60,000
Soldiers and ſailors —	570,000
Employed in adminiſtration and tribunals — —	28,000
Ukraine, Siberia, and the Coſſacs	900,000
Crimea and Cuban —	860,000
Total of the population	21,688,000

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The whole ſubjects of Ruſſia are divided into four claſſes: firſt, that of the great and ſmall nobility; ſecondly, the clergy; thirdly, the merchants, burgeſſes, and other free perſons; and fourthly, the peaſants. The three firſt claſſes comprehend the free ſubjects of the Empire: the fourth, the bondmen or ſlaves.

In almoſt all oriental governments, there is little or no diſtinction of rank among the nobles, except what they derive from offices and honours conferred immediately by their ſovereign. Accordingly, in Ruſſia, the oldeſt ſons of perſons raiſed to the firſt dignities have no prerogatives ariſing from their birth. The grandeur of a family is, as it were, annihilated at the death of its chief; becauſe fortunes are divided equally among the ſons: and with regard to the titles that are hereditary, theſe give no dignity or conſequence, without the concomitant favour of the ſovereign. Thus the right of ſucceſſion by gavel-kind, that in America and other countries is conſidered as one of the greateſt bulwarks of equality and freedom,

is in Ruſſia, as well as Turkey and other deſpotic governments, one of the principal pillars of tyranny. For an hereditary nobility, accumulating wealth and conſequence from generation to generation, could not but be formidable to any throne; and might eaſily, by their combinations in the caſe of minorities, or on other occaſions, ſhake it from the foundations.

As a conſtitutional qualification for holding an office in the Ruſſian government, a perſon muſt be enrolled and have a kind of political exiſtence in one of the fourteen claſſes, called *civil claſſes*, all of which ſuppoſe a military gradation: for in Ruſſia, and in all deſpotic governments, the ſovereign power is altogether military. The Ruſſian courtiers are always ſuppoſed to make a part of the three firſt claſſes. It would be tedious to enumerate all the different claſſes, which deſcend in degrees and reſpectability until we come to the fourteenth and laſt, which comprehends the court pages, a deſcription of men analogous to our low and petti-

pettifogging attornies, and the loweſt ſubalterns among the ſailors and ſoldiers.—After all this claſſification, there does not ſeem to be, in Ruſſia, any deſcription of people of any political and permanent exiſtence beſides the nobles. To this order the preſent Empreſs has granted, beſides the rights conferred on them by Peter IV. new privileges, viz. 1. A preference in military promotion. 2. A preference of reception into military ſchools. 3. The right of buying and ſelling lands. 4. The excluſive privilege of erections for the diſtillation and ſale of brandies. The nobles, on their eſtates, have an authority almoſt abſolute, and diſpoſe of their ſlaves according to their pleaſure. They cannot indeed ſentence them to death: but they may carry puniſhments to the length of mortal conſequences, if death do not follow the puniſhments they inflict in the courſe of three days.—The ſecond order is the clergy, formerly with a patriarch at their head. Peter the Great, finding the patriarch to be a dignitary of too much authority, ſuppreſſed the

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patriarchate in the year 1721. But being too wiſe a politician to declare himſelf the head of the church, he committed the principal direction of eccleſiaſtic affairs in ſpiritual matters to commiſſioners, under the name of the *Holy Synod*, of his own appointment, and bound to him by an oath, that they would acknowledge him as their ſupreme judge. Of this ſynod the Emperor or Empreſs of Ruſſia is preſident. The other members are, a vice-preſident, who is commonly the metropolitan archbiſhop, and five counſellors, who are the firſt prelates of the empire.

The Ruſſian clergy are compoſed of regulars and ſeculars: the firſt, monks; the ſecond, *pappas* or *popes*: i. e. *fathers.*—The monks, like other feudal chiefs, exerciſed abſolute power over their peaſants. But Catharine II. granted freedom to the peaſants dependent on monaſteries, and, while ſhe annexed the eſtates of the clergy to the crown, paid penſions to the monks and prelates. At the ſame time, ſeveral monaſteries were ſuppreſſed, and a conſiderable reduction made

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in the number of monks. Monks, in Ruſſia, are not allowed to marry: but, on the contrary, the marriage of parochial prieſts is a neceſſary preliminary to their ordination; but they muſt not marry any other than young women, being virgins. If their wives die, they may enter into a monaſtery, and afterwards riſe to the higheſt dignities of the church, which are granted to monks alone. They cannot marry a ſecond time, unleſs they become laymen; nor, as widowers, remain in the character of curates or prieſts, without the ſpecial licence of the Biſhops.

The third order of the ſtate is compoſed of freemen, who hold a middle place between the nobles and the peaſants; who are engaged in the arts, ſciences, navigation and commerce, or follow mechanical profeſſions; as alſo ſuch of the children of commoners as ſhall be brought out of ſchools and religious houſes of education eſtabliſhed by the ſovereigns of Ruſſia, and the children too of officers and clerks of chancery. The fourth order conſiſts of the peaſants; who,

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as already obſerved, are in every ſenſe, and to the full extent of the term, bond-men, or ſlaves. The peaſants, however, of Finland, Carelia, and the Ukraine muſt be excepted; and thoſe alſo called *Odnodwortzi*, who have no property but a ſingle houſe. Theſe peaſants are independent of the nobility. They are themſelves the proprietors, and at the ſame time the actual cultivators of the ſoil, having no ſlaves under them. But many of them, by borrowing the name of ſome one of the nobility, have by degrees purchaſed peaſants, over whom, it is ſaid, as might be expected, they exerciſe the ſevereſt tyranny. The other peaſants may be divided into peaſants belonging to the crown, and thoſe belonging to individuals. The former, dwelling on the royal domains, form about a ſixth part of the Ruſſian peaſants, incluſive of thoſe on the church lands, who did not obtain their freedom when theſe lands were transferred to the crown. They are under the direction of the imperial officers or bailiffs: under whom they no doubt ſuffer many hardſhips; but againſt

againſt whoſe abuſe of power they have ſome remedy, or hope of remedy, in the protection of the Empreſs. The moſt wretched of the poor peaſants are thoſe who, like ſheep or cattle, are the property of individuals.

From the new and extraordinary privileges beſtowed on the nobles, one might be apt to imagine, that this order was the principal, and almoſt the excluſive object of her care and attention. But this would be a very unwarrantable concluſion. Whatever political reaſons this great princeſs may have, and that ſhe has we may eaſily imagine, for attaching the nobility to her government, the firſt object in her mind, in times of peace, and next perhaps after that of foreign conqueſt, is the diffuſion of liberty and equality among the ſubjects of her vaſt empire. By the laws and cuſtoms of the empire, a peaſant may obtain his liberty. 1. By the freedom frequently granted at the death of a maſter, to thoſe who have been his firſt ſervants. 2. By purchaſing liberty. 3. By ſerving in the army or navy.

navy. The preſent Empreſs embraces every occaſion of opening a way for this numerous and precious part of mankind, to the enjoyment of liberty, by ceding in their favour many rights of the crown which might, in ſome reſpects, render that acquiſition difficult. Although the Czarina cannot confer on thoſe poor people any privileges of importance that might interfere with thoſe of their maſters, ſhe lightens their burthen, and animates their induſtry, by the hope of liberty.

The Empreſs, for the excitement of general enterpriſe, has allowed every freeman to enroll himſelf, on certain conditions, in the claſs of merchants and burgeſſes: who are divided into three claſſes; the firſt comprehending thoſe who have a capital of about two thouſand five hundred pounds ſterling; the ſecond, thoſe who have about two thouſand; and the third, thoſe who have the ſmalleſt capitals. She has alſo permitted many peaſants on crown lands, to enroll themſelves among the burgeſſes and merchants, and to ſettle in any

part of her eſtates they may chooſe. And, in certain diſtricts, in her own domains, ſhe has aboliſhed the inhuman laws prohibiting peaſants to marry without the conſent of the governor of the province, or magiſtrate of the city, whoſe favour the huſbands were obliged to conciliate by ſuch preſents as their hard earnings enabled them to make. The abrogation of thoſe oppreſſive laws was equally humane and wiſe: as it not only contributed to the comfort and conſolation of individuals, but alſo to the good of the ſtate, by promoting a numerous population.

LETTER XXVIII.

Government of Ruſſia Civil and Political.—Revenues.

St. Peterſburg, March 1791.

THE Ruſſian Empire, which was at firſt divided by Peter the Great into nine extenſive governments, was ſubdivided, firſt into thirty-two, and afterwards, on account of the new provinces added to the empire, into forty-four; containing each, from three to four thouſand ſouls. A governor, called Nameſtnick, is appointed to the adminiſtration of one, and ſometimes ſeveral governments, and has under him a vice-governor, a council and court of juſtice, both civil and criminal, ſome members of which are named by the court, and the reſt elected by the nobility. Thus, by this inſtitution, Catharine II. has circumſcribed, in no inconſiderable degree, her

her own abſolute authority. But, while ſhe has limited the deſpotiſm, ſhe has in proportion conſulted the ſtability and duration of the Ruſſian throne. For, political conſtitutions are precarious or ſtable as they conſiſt of one or more ſprings of action. Rights and privileges and powers, in the hands of different orders of men, are a check on that ſuddenneſs of revolution which is incident to arbitrary governments. And hence it would ſeem to follow, as a natural inference, that the ſureſt baſis of government is juſtice; juſtice, which uniformly grants to every man and claſs of men, their own. The more conſtitutions are aſſimilated to models of perfect juſtice to every individual, and of as much liberty and intereſt in the common property of the ſtate as is conſiſtent with the preſervation and the tranquillity of the political union, the better: but all innovations, or aſſimilations to ſuch abſtracted models, ſhould be leiſurely and circumſpect. Due regard muſt be paid to exiſting orders and privileges, which form the cement of the exiſting conſtitution. If, as a preliminary

to reformation, you loosen the cement, and let the materials that compose the fabric fall to the ground, the edifice that is to rise in its stead, depends not so much on human powers, as on an infinite variety of unforeseen accidents. Metaphysical reforms take up man merely as a reasonable being; whereas he is a being under the influence of various prejudices, appetites, and desires: neither reason nor interest affords any security against the irresistible operation of whim, folly, and passion. The present Empress of Russia has uniformly persevered in her humane and noble plans, from the moment of her ascension to the throne of the Czars: but in proportion as she has advanced in this career of glory, the more she has found the necessity of yielding, in some measure, to present circumstances and situations. The administration of the whole empire is committed to the *directing senate*, and to the principal departments distinguished by the name of *colleges*. The senate, which is a new institution, has succeeded in the room of the courts of chancery established by Peter I. This,

This, which is the supreme tribunal, takes cognizance of all the reſt. It is divided into ſix departments, compoſed each of one or more ſenators, who preſide each in their turn; of four privy counſellors, and a principal attorney. Under each of theſe departments is placed, for the execution of the laws, one of the colleges juſt mentioned, under the denominations of, the college of war, the college for foreign affairs, the college of the admiralty, the college of juſtice, and the college of commerce. There is alſo a college of medicine, charged with furniſhing the imperial laboratories, which again furniſh the private laboratories, which are the only ſhops of the kind in moſt of the towns of ſecond rank. The college of juſtice is divided into ſeveral chambers for the trial of criminal and civil caſes. The firſt of theſe ſits at St. Peterſburg, and the ſecond at Roſtroma. There is one for criminal trials at Catherinoſlaw, another at Riga, a third at Kiow, and a fourth at Tobolſki.

There is not a country in Europe, in which juſtice is lengthened and tortured

into a lucrative trade, more than in Ruſſia. The *dikaſteres*, or courts of juſtice, are full of attornies, the moſt inſolent and unmannerly crew in all Peterſburg, who, in ſpite of their great numbers, find all of them ways and means to live. And, to augment the vexation as well as the expence of the law, the moſt trifling deed is drawn out on ſtamped paper. But before the time of the preſent Empreſs the natural diſpoſition of the Ruſſians to litigation was encouraged by an extreme confuſion and inconſiſtency in the laws. Several emperors, and particularly Peter I. and the Empreſs Elizabeth, had formed the deſign of reforming the laws: but this was never carried into execution, until Catharine II. in 1767, called the Moſcow deputies from all parts of the empire, appointed commiſſioners to frame new regulations, and delivered to them inſtructions which ſhe herſelf had drawn up: in conformity with thoſe inſtructions, the firſt part of the new code, diſtinguiſhed by clemency and political wiſdom, appeared in 1775, and the ſecond in 1780.

The REVENUES of Ruſſia ariſe from the taxes paid by the countries conquered from Sweden, and taken from Poland; a capitation tax laid on all males in the claſſes of burgeſſes and peaſants, from their birth to their death; the cuſtom-houſe duties, which are very heavy; gabelles, or the ſelling of ſalt, a monopoly in the hands of government; the revenues of royal domains enlarged by the annexation of the church-lands, the licences for inns, the produce of the mines and the coinage of money, the emiſſion of bank-bills, and duties on timber: the ſums drawn from all theſe different ſources do not amount to ſix millions ſterling. It is not eaſy to conceive how, with a ſum ſo moderate, the Empreſs can ſupport the magnificence of her court, the various eſtabliſhments ſhe has formed, the buildings erected and maintained at her expence, her acts of generoſity, her munificence to the arts and ſciences, the purchaſes ſhe is conſtantly making in different parts of Europe, and the preſents with which ſhe rewards all kinds of extraordinary merit.

LETTER XXIX.

Anecdotes of foreign Officers in the Ruſſian Service—of Count ——, a French Officer killed at the Siege of Iſmael—of Prince Potemkin, a Polander—of General Gordon—of Count Romanzow—of Marſhal Keith.—Of the Progreſs of Civilization in different Countries.

St. Peterſburg, April 1791.

THIS new country, emerged not many years ſince from the deſerts of Tartary, preſents a new theatre for all ſorts of adventurers. Peace invites the ſober and induſtrious to profit by the commerce which it has lately commenced with the world; and war, the more gallant diſpoſition of youthful chevaliers.

The Engliſh are chiefly employed in the fleet. The Germans are the moſt numerous

rous foreign officers in their armies. The prefent fituation of France has brought hither feveral naval and military heroes from that nation.

While I ftood one evening in the bar of the Englifh tavern, converfing with fome officers of my acquaintance, the Count —— arrived from France. He fpoke Englifh, and joined with us in difcourfe. It related to the naval engagements laft war in the Weft Indies, and particularly to the glorious 12th of April. The Count had fought againft us in the American army. He wore the orders of St. Lewis and Cincinnatus.

An Englifh tar recorded, with rather too much animation, the defeat of the French navy. The Count fmiled, and left us. In a few days, he procured a commiffion in the Ruffian army; and, having exchanged the white for the green uniform, he drove off to join the army under the command of General Suwarrow. This French nobleman, with all the politenefs which diftinguifhes his nation, poffeffed an open and frank manner of addrefs; and I do affure you, that

the intelligence of his fall in the dreadful carnage at the attack of Iſmael, drew tears from the ſame rough Britiſh tar, who had ſo loudly boaſted in the preſence of the Count of the defeat of his country.

Prince Potemkin, prime miniſter of Ruſſia, and commander in chief of the army, is by birth a Pole, and at the commencement of his fortunes an adventurer, and holding an inferior rank in one of the regiments of guards, of which he is now lieutenant colonel. Her Imperial Majeſty is herſelf colonel of all her regiments of guards, and on particular days appears in the uniform of thoſe regiments.

The Prince Potemkin, I think, made his firſt eſſay as a ſergeant. With reſpect to his abilities, they are naturally great, but uncultivated. Arbitrary governments are certainly the beſt ground for enterpriſing genius: diſtinguiſhed merit and attachment to the ſovereign will never fail to overpower thoſe who have only intereſt.

Prince Potemkin has, however, in Ruſſia, few friends but his auguſt ſovereign. Let

merit be ever ſo diſtinguiſhed, the antient nobility of a kingdom cannot patiently view what they deem upſtarts paſſing them: and the Prince's behaviour being rude to an extreme does not at all conciliate. The celebrated General Romanzow cannot bear the idea of Potemkin's ſuperiority of command, and has retired from the ſervice. Potemkin is a very fortunate general; and though he ſhould want all other requiſites, this ſingle one has and will ſtill bear him on triumphant. This *ci-devant* ſergeant has as many palaces in the metropolis as the Empreſs. One of them, conſtructed of timber, was in flames at the moment of his arrival from the conqueſt of Oczakow, in February 1789, as if to illuminate his entry. I ſhall in another place give you a detail of the life of this extraordinary man.

Admiral Greig, long at the head of the Ruſſian navy, was another fortunate adventurer, but of a different character from Prince Potemkin; yet the meekeſt and moſt unaſſuming deportment could not obtain him the entire good will of the Ruſſians.

Alexis

Alexis Michaelowitch, father of Peter the Great, was the firſt to encourage trading foreigners. Peter, of another complexion and turn, encouraged moſt thoſe who could aſſiſt him in building a navy and diſciplining an army. The Scotch emigrants arrived at Moſcow at a fortunate period. Peter had in them a nurſery for raiſing officers; and we find a General Gordon his principal favourite, inſomuch, that when Peter travelled to Holland and England, he left this officer in the chief command. A rebellion broke out in the Emperor's abſence: General Gordon had an opportunity of proving his courage and fidelity in quelling it, and at a time when there were ſeveral candidates for the throne. Theſe early ſervices of Britons eſtabliſhed their reputation with the ſovereigns of Ruſſia; and hence the encouragement given them by all ſucceeding monarchs.

The ocean is the native element of Britons: the military liſts of Ruſſia preſent few commanders in chief from our iſland unleſs Marſhal Keith, the illuſtrious preceptor and general

general of the no leſs illuſtrious Romanzow, who ſerved as a common ſoldier in the ranks of General Keith's regiment, for the purpoſe of acquiring the knowledge of the duty of a ſoldier in every ſtation.

Peter himſelf gloried in having riſen, in his own fleets and armies, from the rank of a common ſeaman in the one, and of a common ſoldier in the other, to the chief command, without permitting the ſmalleſt intereſt to be exerted in his favour.

If the miniſter of war, or of the naval department, ſhewed any inclination to give the Emperor a preference, upon his examination with other officers, or upon account of any action performed, he deemed it inſulting him; having a noble pride in ſuppoſing himſelf qualified to arrive at the moſt eminent ſtations without the prior advantage of being an emperor.

That foreign officers were and ſtill are needed to aſſiſt the native officers of Ruſſia in the army and navy, bears no reflection upon the native officers. Every nation in its

its turn has had the aſſiſtance of foreigners. I cannot indeed name the Venetian officers who formerly ſerved in, and commanded the Britiſh fleets, but we certainly had ſome from that earlier maritime power. It is better known that the Roman officers diſciplined our army. Nor is it any cenſure upon the induſtry or ingenuity of the Ruſſians, that foreigners teach them the arts. England, the nation moſt famous for manufactures, was inſtructed by the Flemings to work their ſtaple commodity, wool; and I think one of our Edwards, in a proclamation to his people, gave them notice of the arrival of three or four weavers from Flanders, which, ſaid the monarch, "*may prove of great benefit to us and our* "*ſubjects.*"

The comparative ſtate of architecture in Ruſſia and other countries, ſhould not hurt their pride, or make them ſo jealous of our magnificent fabrics. Two hundred and fifty years ago, our dwellings were more humble than the modern Ruſſian cottage, conſtructed

conſtructed of ſods of earth and thatched with ſtraw, and our beds of the ſame œconomical commodity.

It is not amiſs to notice memorandums of old days, to qualify the pride ariſing from excellencies, of which time has all the merit; and to encourage infant nations, and to prevent them from deſponding, from the idea of others poſſeſſing more wiſdom or abilities than themſelves.

The Ruſſians cannot however be much condemned for a jealouſy ſo natural to our boſoms, and particularly as they are among the laſt in appearing upon the theatre of civilization. I do not mean that they are among the laſt at this period uncivilized. Many nations are far behind the Ruſſians in arts of civilization; but theſe were once diſtinguiſhed by arts and ſciences. The Ruſſians are among the laſt of thoſe nations upon the theatre of civilization who were never civilized before; and, allow that they are ſlower in proportion; (which is not however the caſe), ſuch an immenſe body, covering the wideſt regions, ſhould not be expected

pected to move with the ſame rapidity as a ſmall body.

The civilization of Ruſſia raiſes, as it were, from the dead the whole northern nations. Their light of civilization does not riſe with the quickneſs of a meteor; but with the more ſteady ſplendour of the ſun.

LETTER XXX.

Diſtinguiſhing Characteriſtics of the Northern Nations—of the Britiſh Conſtitution—of Commerce and Agriculture in Britain.—The Britiſh and Ruſſian Peaſant, their Situation compared:—the Wretchedneſs of the firſt, the Happineſs of the laſt.—Of the fatal Effects of overgrown Commerce.

Ingria, July 1791.

THE northern nations inhabiting the ſame countries, and living under the ſame ſkies, are yet very different in national character. The Dane, the former lord of Scandinavia, is ſullen, from reflection of his former power. The Swede, proud of having ſhaken off the Daniſh yoke, is proud too of the chains of his native ſovereigns. The Finlander never had a native ſovereign: he can

can ſhew no regiſter of war and murder; no liſt of heroic plunderers; no ſtandards taken from the enemy in battle: he contents himſelf with wearing at ſecond hand the ſhackles which ſurrounding nations have manufactured for themſelves under the direction of their princes.

The Ruſſians, emerging from the region of ſlavery, *Sclavonia*, are daily advancing in the arts of peace, which lead to freedom. Happy for them that they have before them, as upon a map, the example of other kingdoms, and that from this example they may be taught to eſcape, and to beware of the deluge of blood, the anarchy and ruin attending haſty ſtruggles to obtain freedom!

In great commercial countries, the appearance of liberty is better preſerved without the real enjoyment of it, than in other nations. In the firſt, a great proportion of the people are rendered wealthy by trade, foreign and domeſtic. As theſe, together with the wealthy landed proprietors and others, employ a vaſt number of manufacturers, ſhop-

ſhopkeepers, artiſts, ſervants, and the lower order of traders of all deſcriptions, it follows, that ſo immenſe a body mutually ſupporting each other, the leſs rich and inferior orders among them will not complain much, while they can collect in various ways a ſhare of their wealth, in whatever way that wealth be attained; whether by oppreſſing the loweſt order, by trade, or by places and penſions.

But allowing this immenſe body to be contented ſo far, yet while another conſiderable part of the community are ſtarving, their contentment is no proof of the freedom of a nation, or of the juſtice of the laws, which permit the moſt induſtrious and uſeful and virtuous part of the community to drag out a painful exiſtence. I allude to the day-labourer employed in agriculture: and ſtrange as it may ſeem, the day-labourer in Britain in no ſhape lives ſo comfortably and happy as the Ruſſian ſlave. It is hard that commerce ſhould occaſion, as it actually does, the ruin of the peaſantry.

In old times the landholder lived in a

more diſtinguiſhed manner than he does now: the ſmall farmers and cottagers upon his eſtate lived happy: there were no day-labourers; the ſons and daughters, the ſervants, *who lived in the houſe with the family*, did every work. The number of hands employed upon the eſtates were double and triple to what they are at preſent, if we take into the account the different ſtates of agriculture atthat period and at the preſent.

Commerce and luxury have occaſioned the preſent melancholy alteration. The merchant emulates the landholder, and ſurpaſſes him in wealth and manner of living. The landholder, deſpiſing trade, has recourſe to new methods leſs honourable, to keep pace in magnificence with the upſtart warehouſeman. He turns away all his cottagers. He lets out his eſtate in large farms to a few tenants at ſhort leaſes, and at the higheſt rents. The leaſes expired, he again racks the rent to ſupport an increaſe of extravagance. The fields which ſupported many a happy family, are laid out in graſs to fatten various brute animals for the markets

in trading towns, and to ſupply a more luxurious food for perſons engaged in trade.

Many of the cottagers become, of conſequence, traders and manufacturers, porters, chairmen, &c. The city is reared and filled, every dirty lane is crowded. The cottage is in ruins and deſerted. The farmer, racked to the utmoſt, upon the other hand, employs as few labourers as poſſible, and in the moſt œconomical manner. Inſtruments are invented to effect laborious purpoſes without the aid of men. The extenſion of trade ſtill fails to employ every body, and a conſiderable number remain to ſtarve upon the ſcanty pittance of the farmer, who gives money inſtead of maintenance that he may with the more certainty know his expenditure. He keeps all the lands in his own hands. The labourers and cottagers had formerly a houſe, a ſmall portion of land, upon which they raiſed ſome corn, and maintained perhaps both a horſe and cow, beſides what they could otherways earn from the head maſter.

Allowing the day-labourer to have one ſhilling to eighteen pence a day, and this

upon an average, is the full ſum he has over all Britain; allow his family to conſiſt of a wife and three children, how is it poſſible they can live, having every thing to purchaſe, and nearly at 30 per cent. higher than the ordinary rate of the market, owing to the very ſmall quantities they are able to purchaſe at a time? But when a day-labourer's family conſiſts of nine or ten children, and his earning only one ſhilling a day, which is frequently the caſe, what then muſt be his miſeries!

Thus, men employed in the moſt rational and innocent buſineſs of life are made wretched by commerce, while the drunken porter in large cities can with leſs, or with equal exertion, make five, to eight and ten ſhillings per day.

Theſe are the bleſſings of commerce and luxury. The day-labourer is out of our ſight: we ſee and hear nothing in our cities, but the rattling of ſplendid equipages, elegant ſhops and hotels, and all the blaze of luxury and diſſipation: the harbours are crowded with ſhipping, the warehouſes with goods,

goods, and our minifters defcant upon the profperous ftate of the nation.

I think it is Dr. Goldfmith, who fomewhere remarks, that a nation, like a bit of paper on fire, may make a fine fhow while it is haftening to decay.

To defcant upon profperity, while it carries with it a flame that muft confume it, is as ridiculous as to pourtray a difeafe without pointing out a cure. The cure is fimple. Every landholder fhould be obliged to furnifh a fmall houfe for every labourer employed by the farmers upon his eftate. Half of the prefent wages to be paid them in money; and in confideration of the other half, the labourer fhall have befides a free houfe, a fmall garden, and permiffion to graze one cow in the farmer's paftures. Unmarried as well as married labourers fhould be hired upon the fame terms for the encouragement of matrimony, as well as to prevent, as is now the cafe, a preference being given to unmarried men.

The Ruffian peafants are all of them cottagers; and although they pay an arbitrary

rent to their lords, I have not yet found any inſtance, where the peaſant could not with common induſtry pay his rent, do all his ſervices, and live comfortably. The only improvement to better their ſituation is for the lord to take a rent without perſonal ſervice; as this ſometimes proves fatal to the cottager's own crop. The landholder may keep as many of his ſlaves as are neceſſary in his immediate employment upon his own farms. Even when the Ruſſian cottager fails in paying his rent, and is ruined, by whatever cauſe, the landholder muſt maintain him and his family; ſo that a ſufficient check is eſtabliſhed upon the proprietor not to uſe his peaſants harſhly. A Ruſſian peaſant drinks to the amount of half the wages of the Britiſh day-labourer yearly in brandy: his family and himſelf are, notwithſtanding of this, never in want of victuals. If a joyful heart and a ſufficient ſubſiſtence are marks of happineſs, the Ruſſian boor is happy: if the want of theſe be a mark of miſery, the Britiſh peaſant is wretched. The Ruſſian peaſant is liable to

receive a ſevere beating from his overſeer when he deſerves it: the Britiſh peaſant cannot be ſtruck, but he is liable to ſtarve.

If the Ruſſian peaſantry, forming the maſs of this nation, are ſo well provided for: if the remainder of the people are ſtill wealthier and happier, who are engaged in trade and manufactures, what are the ſuperior advantages derived from overgrown commerce and wealth? what advantage from a free conſtitution, when the ſituation of the maſs of a nation we call ſlaves, is proved to be more agreeable and happy than our own?

It is true our conſtitution poſſeſſes more than any other the power of rectifying itſelf; but if this power is not drawn forth, what avails it? It is a mockery of the people for men in power to ſay, "We can make you happy if we chooſe." They may at laſt provoke the people to reply, "You ſhall make us happy inſtantly, or we will make you miſerable."

In no country upon earth is public and private charity ſo diſtinguiſhable as in Bri-

 tain:

tain: but it provides only for invalids: the day-labourer is equally an object of charity, until the laws provide better for him, and prevent the effects of overgrown commerce and luxury from ruining the most useful part of the community. It is not merely in this most useful art of peace, agriculture, that the peasant is serviceable: he makes the best soldier when his country requires defence, accustomed to hard labour and living, and exposed at all times to the weather. This very art of peace fits him for the art of war: the woodman with his axe is a native pioneer: the hedger and ditcher will with little instruction construct entrenchments and batteries: he who forms the public roads will construct one through a difficult pass for an army: they can subsist upon the coarsest fare, and undergo every fatigue. Is it this class of men whom Britain permits to starve?

Commerce encourages no active employments, unless seamen, nor promotes hardiness and health. The bulk of our manufacturers live too well to be fit for any

active ſcene, unleſs in riots in their neighbourhoods; and the generality of traders are abler to pay others for defending them, than to defend themſelves. Whenever wealth is procured, all activity ceaſes, unleſs to accumulate, and to obtain additional gratifications of ſenſe.

The celebrated Dr. Adam Smith has certainly pointed out the beſt methods for nations to acquire wealth. If he had taught how to procure happineſs with it, to the whole body of the people, his work might have been more celebrated. The wealth of nations is incompatible with happineſs. No nation will ever be happy who increaſes trade rather than agriculture; and by agriculture I mean rearing crops of corn, not of graſs. Paſturage and the other crops for the brute creation, baniſh men from their native homes, and collect them together in luxurious, vicious bodies to feed upon animal food: or, if the country has no trade, paſturage annihilates the human race: the natives are vagrant wanderers and robbers, plundering and murdering each other.

Suppoſe

Suppoſe every eſtate in England was let, by four or five acres to one family, and two thirds of this farm producing corn. Would not the eſtates be inhabited by ten times the number of its preſent inhabitants? Trade and agriculture would then employ every perſon, and maintain them. Trade would only draw off from the more human and rational profeſſion of agriculture the enterpriſing ſpirits. Great cities would be inhabited by choice, not from neceſſity to procure a livelihood, by adminiſtering to the vices and follies of the wealthy and exalted ranks: and when the period arrives that cities are inhabited by choice, they will be leſs diſtinguiſhed by vice and folly. Men are not vicious and fooliſh by choice: and a few wealthy and vicious individuals will not corrupt the bulk of the people, did not they depend ſo much upon the wealthy, and were they not thus drawn in to follow their example, as a ſervant the wicked courſes of his maſter.

Monopolies are ſcouted in trade; why not

not too in agriculture? Large farms are monopolies, and are more diſtreſſing to ſociety than monopolies in commerce. To regulate by law the properties of individuals for the good of the public, is not to rob individuals: nay, it would in reality increaſe their incomes: and the view of thouſands of ſmiling villagers might afford as much pleaſure as the lowing of herds, and the bleating of flocks.

It is a datum long ſince granted in agriculture, that the greater quantity of produce is conſumed upon eſtates, they will be ſo much the more fertile. The modern farmer is put to vaſt expence in bringing manure from a diſtance of ſeveral miles, which increaſes in proportion the prices of the produce. The advocate of commerce will ſtart this objection, that produce conſumed at home will employ leſs ſhipping in exporting to foreign countries and coaſtways, and that the nurſery of ſeamen for our fleet will be hurt. I anſwer, that where capital, induſtry, and commercial habits and enterprize prevail, ſubjects and

channels

channels of commerce will never be wanting: and, at any rate, a ſufficient number of ſeamen for the defence of the nation, though not, perhaps, for the wars of the miniſter, might ſtill be had. This number will conſiſt of the enterpriſing and turbulent, the beſt adapted for war; and not, as upon the preſent ſyſtem, of Britons dragged from their families and friends.

LET-

LETTER XXXI.

Norway—and Lapland.

St. Peterſburg, Auguſt 1791.

YOU deſired me to give you my obſervations on the kingdom of Norway and the Norwegians, from whom ſo great a part of Britain is peopled.

The Norwegian women are celebrated for their fecundity; and every inhabitable part of Norway ſwarms with people: vaſt regions are covered with woods, we need not ſay with rocks, becauſe the very rocks are covered with pine-trees: it is common to ſee trees growing, and twiſting their roots for their ſupport and nouriſhment around, and into every crevice of the ſtone, where there is no ſoil viſible. Every precipice in

Norway

Norway is overhung with theſe nodding plumes.

Norway, or Norwey, has its name from its ſituation, *i. e.* the northern way; the way to the north. It is divided into five provinces: firſt, Wardhus, or Norwegian Lapland. Of this province it is ſufficient to obſerve, that it lies within the arctic circle. The natives are a diſtinct race from the inhabitants of the other provinces: they are ignorant, but a harmleſs people.

They were probably the firſt inhabitants of Sweden and Norway; the firſt adventurers from Scythia, and driven from the ſouthern parts into thoſe dreary deſerts, by new invaders, long before their irruptions into Britain. Hiſtorians agree that thoſe ſwarms choked up every corner of the north, and that it was in ſearch of more room, and of bread, rather than of fame and conqueſt, that they marched to the ſouth.

The poor Laplanders, then dwelling in Sweden and Norway, were no doubt firſt diſinherited: they have ſtill traditions among them, of battles with thoſe invaders; and from

from their manners and cuftoms at this day, we can trace their Scythian origin. The Goths, I fhall fuppofe, did not make choice of the northern mountains for a dwelling-place, until they had attempted the richer foil and finer climate of France and Italy. They were driven back by Marius into Germany; from whence, as it was unable to fupport increafing fwarms of yearly emigrants, they would be obliged to pafs over into Scandinavia.

How the Laplanders came into Sweden, and at what period, bids defiance almoft even to conjecture. I cannot think they entered Sweden and Norway by the way of Germany. This fine country would have detained them. It is more probable that their unlucky ftars led them by the head of the Bothnian Gulph. Thofe difmal regions upon the Frozen Ocean, from Wardhus to the northern cape of Kamfchatka, are ftill inhabited by a race of men fimilar to the Laplanders, and who, no doubt, had taken the fame ill-fated journey from Tartary.

The natives of Wardhus maintain them-

felves

ſelves chiefly by fiſhing in ſummer; and they lay up a ſtock of fiſh, too, for the long winter. They have, beſides, great herds of rein-deer, which are to them inſtead of horſes and cows: they live upon their milk; ſeldom kill them; and when they have fleſh meat, it is of the bear and other animals, which they procure by hunting. Their habitations are tents in ſummer, erected near the moſt favourable ſpots for hunting, fiſhing, and grazing.

In winter they bury themſelves in conical huts, covered with earth, to keep out the ſevere cold. The furs of the bear and wolf furniſh them with clothing. Unacquainted with luxury, and accuſtomed to hardſhips, they have few wants.

The Norwegians and Danes have at laſt prevailed upon them to believe that they are in want of ſome things, and they exchange their furs for brandy, meal, and other articles. As their country produces ſo few commodities for trade, they ingeniouſly contrived ſome others. They were formerly famous for dealing in winds, thunder,

and lightning, wholesale and retail; and *still*, now and then, pick up a foolish mariner to purchase a talisman and magical notes.

The crown of Denmark receives little benefit from this class of its subjects: a few skins and fish is all they have to spare. The Danish government, nevertheless, takes some pains in civilizing the Laplanders; and the missionaries have converted many of them to christianity.—Driven, at an early period, from the southern provinces of Sweden and Norway, they were not instructed in the doctrines of christianity on their introduction into these kingdoms: but they escaped the deluge of blood with which christians afterwards covered one another for ages.—Drontheim is the next province to Wardhus; and here begins what is commonly called Norway, as distinguished from Norwegian Lapland. The next is Bergen; and the other two, bordering upon the arm of the sea leading to the Categate, are Agerhus and Bahus.

Norway has two summers and two win-

ters. Towards the ſea coaſts, and eſpecially in the ſouthern parts, the climate is mild; neither too hot in ſummer, nor too cold in winter. The neighbourhood of the ocean eaſily accounts for this happy temperature. Inland, the ſummer is as hot as the winter is cold. The high mountains obſtruct the oblique rays of the winter's ſun from warming the deep vallies between them, and retain long, upon their tops, ice and ſnow.

As the mountains occaſion an increaſe of cold in winter, ſo they are the cauſe of increaſed heat in ſummer. The ſun, more vertical, darts his rays into the vallies, and upon the mountains' ſides, which, cloſely ſurrounding the vallies, collect thoſe rays as in a focus. The farther to the north, the effect is the ſtronger, as the cauſe is increaſed by the greater altitude of the ſun, and his longer continuance above the horizon. In Lapland, the ſun for ſome time in ſummer is ſeen revolving round the earth, without ſetting; and when he ſets, it is for ſo ſhort a ſpace, that the vallies have not

had

had time to cool, when his fierce rays again heat them.

But this orb, as if it had exhaufted its ftrength and heat, never rifes to enlighten thefe dreary lands in winter. A feeble twilight, a darknefs vifible, accompanies his approach to the horizon: but his glowing edge is never feen, nor is there a cloud gilded with his beams.

Lapland has only one day, and one night, in the year: her day, of two months' continuance; her gloomy night, of ten.

The moon however cheers the Laplander, and the reflection of her rays upon the fnow and ice, which fpreads every where, gives fufficient light for their winter's work and travelling.

Indeed they could not travel at any other feafon. The fnow fmooths the rugged way, and enables the rein-deer to draw the fledges with amazing rapidity. How admirable is the providence of nature! Were the fun to fhine upon Lapland during winter, and at the fame time fhould the fnow continue upon the ground, it would deprive

the inhabitants of ſight.—Even the reflection of the moon's rays from the ſnow occaſions blindneſs in many of the natives. The laws of nature have rendered the continuance of the ſun and of ſnow, for any length of time, above the horizon, incompatible.

The Norwegians are a fine race of men, of a free and generous ſpirit, and watch over their liberties with unremitted vigilance. Many ages have elapſed ſince they have ſettled quietly at home, and ceaſed to diſturb the liberties of others. The Norwegians are all huſbandmen, fiſhermen, or mariners. There are few other diſtinct profeſſions among them: every one, as is commonly the caſe in northern countries in general, is his own taylor, carpenter, ſhoemaker, ſmith, &c. They ſhew much ingenuity in every thing they undertake; and ſome of the greateſt curioſities in the Royal Muſeum at Copenhagen are the handiworks of Norwegian peaſants. The fiſheries upon the coaſts of Norway, and merchant ſhips, employ one half of the inhabitants; the

the other half are employed in agriculture, the iron and copper mines, cutting, tranſporting, and ſawing of timber, and ſhip-building. The ſea coaſts are ſo formed, as to ſave trouble and expence of many nets in their fiſheries: the whole is a kind of net-work of rocks, and thouſands of ſmall inlets of the ſea, always filled in the ſeaſon with ſhoals of fiſh. The Norwegians have only to caſt a net at the entrance of the inlet, in order to prevent the fiſh from going away, and another to drag them to the ſhore. Several kinds are ſalted; others are cured by the ſimple proceſs of ſpreading them upon the rocks.

After laying in their yearly quantity for home conſumption, and for the merchant veſſels, the Norwegians export vaſt quantities to every corner of Europe. There are numbers of rivers in Norway; but an inconveniency occurs, naturally to be expected in ſuch a mountainous country: their navigation, even for ſmall boats, is interrupted by water-falls. The timber cut in the inland foreſts is ſadly broken before

it arrives at the ſea-ports, being hurled down every cataract in its way, and with ſuch force as to be daſhed againſt the rocky bottom of the river beneath. For this there is no remedy, as the carriage by land would be impracticable, and, at any rate, attended with an expence double the value of the balks. The property of many different merchants is floated down at the ſame time; and each is enabled to know his own at its arrival, by his diſtinguiſhing mark, put upon the trees at the time of their being cut down in the woods.

Great Britain is the principal market for their timber. The vaſt quantity exported, and the difficulty of bringing the balks from the new foreſts at great diſtances, which muſt be reſorted to when thoſe nearer are thinned or cut down, has raiſed the prices conſiderably within theſe few years; and the practice of cutting the young trees for foreign markets will add to the ſcarcity and price. The Daniſh government ought to make a ſerious enquiry into theſe matters: for, if the price increaſes in proportion to

what

what it has done of late, the Britiſh importer will find out other markets where to ſupply himſelf at cheaper rates.

The Norwegians begin to copy the Engliſh in the modelling of their ſhips, and build very fine ones for ſale, as well as for their own uſe. The clumſy gallies of the Hans-towns, the firſt European commercial ſtates, are no longer the models for the ſhips of other nations; though ſeveral of the cities which were in this famous compact, ſtill perſiſt in the old faſhion of their aiks, which firſt floated upon our ſeas, in order to preſerve, no doubt, ſome remembrance of their former ſplendour.

The Norwegians are active and honourable in their dealings, and exceedingly keen in proſecuting ſchemes of trade. They are celebrated for their longevity, and of a hardy ſtrong conſtitution both of body and mind. They do not bury themſelves in furs, as moſt of the northern people do; they pique themſelves on keeping cold at defiance, and, to ſhew their hardineſs, will even put ſnow into their boſoms. A warm

drefs is confidered as effeminate: and this idea feems to be received too amongft Britons. At this day, there are greater numbers that die in Britain of cold, than of all other difeafes notoriginating in colds, put together: and this evil entirely arifes from a foolifh pride of ftrutting about in thofe thin flices of modern manufacture. The golden fleeces of our fheep, given us by kind nature to guard us againft the peculiar inconftancy of our climate, are frittered away into fpiders webs. For my part, I am at no lofs to decide which appears moft effeminate, to wear a comfortable great-coat, or to fhiver to death under a gauze tippet. The Norwegians do not carry the jeft fo far; it is only with their bofoms they ufe freedom, in the pride of their heart. They wear clothes of coarfe warm ftuffs.

The Norwegians are exceedingly fond of dancing: they are continually trotting to the found of the violin. In winter, there is a ball in every third houfe, in every town in Norway, each evening: and even in fummer, when their daily labours are

over,

over, they aſſemble in parties to dance and drink.

I have ſeen the Norwegian ſailors dancing upon their ſhip's deck at ſea, in calm weather; and one never meets with their veſſels at ſea without hearing a concert, if the weather is moderate. Their muſic is without melody, and their playing without art; but they are determined to be pleaſed.

Of a lively diſpoſition, they are quick and violent in their paſſions, eſpecially when intoxicated. In former times, it was common for the gueſts at an entertainment to have knives in their belts, ready to determine upon the ſpot any quarrel that might ariſe in the courſe of the feaſt. The laws have now curbed this cuſtom of monarchs; and the Norwegian ſells his knife, and all his moveables and immoveables, to enable him to ruin himſelf by law-ſuits with every perſon who vexes him. Nay, when he is ruined, he is certain of a ſubſcription from his neighbours, to help him to renew his attacks.

LETTER XXXII.

Russian Climate.—Contrast of Russian and English Customs.—Winter Assemblies.—Russians and French nearly resemble each other in Character, Manners, and Customs.

St. Petersburg, April 1791.

DEAR SIR,

THIS winter is not so agreeable as the last. The weather is variable. We have one week of severe frost; and another succeeds of thaw and sleet. Such a winter is not only dangerous to the constitution, but is attended with fatal consequences in regard to the provision of the natives. The frozen beef, fowl and fish become clammy and putrid; and notwithstanding the care of the police to have such provision destroyed, the poor will purchase it; or, if a frost again succeeds, the putrid provision, a second

time frozen, is ſold in the market, and diſeaſe and death retailed out to the inhabitants.

The idea of a Scythian winter makes the people of more ſouthern regions tremble—eternal ice and ſnow! A Ruſſian conſiders it as the greateſt misfortune if ice and ſnow do not remain for ſix months of the year; and the more ſevere the froſt, the finer the winter is eſteemed. He has laid in proviſion for this length of time for himſelf, his family, and cattle, and a ſufficient quantity of wood for his ſtoves: nothing can interrupt this happy ſituation but a thaw to ſpoil his proviſions. A Ruſſian looks up to the frowning face of heaven in winter with a ſmile: he trembles when the ſun makes his way through the clouds. A mild winter in Ruſſia overturns not only the œconomy, but the amuſements and exerciſes of the natives. They look forward to the cold ſeaſon as a ſeaſon of reſt and mirth: covered with furs, and ſeated in his ſledge, none is ſo happy as a Ruſſian; his horſes fly with him over the ice and ſnow; he ſings and drinks

drinks without ceaſing from October to May. Nor is the approach of winter leſs delightful to the higher ranks. This is the ſeaſon of every thing elegant in dreſs and manners. The ſummer is ſpent in collecting their rents, the winter in ſpending them. Their ancient dreſs and hoſpitality are to be ſeen in winter only in the great cities. The antiquated caſtle is deſerted ; the wild winds whiſtle through the halls : but here wealth and joy are maſters of the revels.

The Ruſſians are very happy in winter, and they wiſh every perſon to know and to witneſs their happineſs. The Briton, when he reſolves to be merry with his friends, makes faſt his window ſhutters, ſecures every hole through which curioſity might be tempted to peep at him and them, and is not at his eaſe if any perſon comes uninvited. A Ruſſian, whether of the higher or lower claſs, ſeldom knows what is to be the number of his company. His windows have no ſhutters ; or, if they have, they are only ſhut when the company is gone, as if it were to declare his melancholy. His

candles

candles are all lighted up; the dining or dancing room is one blaze of light, and illuminates the oppoſite ſtreet and houſes. The company are diſtinctly ſeen by every paſſenger; but ſo accuſtomed are they to theſe ſcenes, that they ſeldom ſtop to ſurvey them. It is otherwiſe with a Briton. I took my ſtation near the window of every ball-room which I found out in my evening walks, and I had a better opportunity of viewing the Ruſſian manners without doors than if I had been one of the company.

The winter aſſemblies, unleſs thoſe at private houſes, indiſcriminately admit, and at an eaſy charge, every perſon. The public aſſemblies here are generally maſquerades, though the ſtiff German and Briton have introduced a few ſelect clubs and parties. There are German balls, and Engliſh balls; and only a few Germans admitted to the one, and a few Engliſh to the other. To the honour of Ruſſia, there is a Ruſſian ball: they mix with foreigners, and delight to do it; and the higher their rank, with the more eaſe and familiarity. This is, no doubt,

doubt, in part, a newly acquired character in the Ruſſians. The ancient manners of their great families were diſtinguiſhed by pride and ceremony; yet it does them much honour ſo quickly to throw them off, and to chooſe for their pattern the politeſt nation in the world. The German and Engliſhman reſiding here, however, take to themſelves the credit of reforming the Ruſſian manners; but I am at a loſs to find out in what the Ruſſians have copied after them, unleſs it be in their manner of war, of commerce and navigation. The Ruſſians and French, after whom the former have copied many poliſhed improvements, ſeem to have had the ſame original. I never ſaw two people ſo like each other; even under the diſguiſe of the beard and ſheep-ſkin, the ſimilarity of features is ſtriking. The Ruſſian boor has all the vivacity and eaſe of the French: the ſenſations of pleaſure and pain have, as with them, inſtantaneous communication with his heart: he has the very ſhrug of the Frenchman. It does not ſignify that the Ruſſian is in different ſituations proud, ſtiff,

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apparently ſtupid, and unfeeling: this is his aſſumed or acquired character, as he is in office or a ſlave: I am ſpeaking of his natural character. The French, poliſhed as they are, have been too ſuddenly let looſe; and this vivacity has betrayed them into ſhameful barbarities. Were the unpoliſhed Ruſſian looſened at once from his chain, his barbarities would go beyond all bounds. The Ruſſian is however far from having a ſavage diſpoſition; but his unpoliſhed vivacity requires as yet ſevere laws, and a longer acquaintance with men and manners, with arts and ſciences, to curb it.

In Peterſburg I have an opportunity of examining not merely the character of the Ruſſians, but of various nations, as far as theſe can be drawn from heterogeneous collections. Theſe foreigners are all of them anxious to diſplay the faſhions and character of their reſpective countries, before the Ruſſian; no doubt with the liberal intention of inſtructing him. They are unfortunately ignorant that the higher claſſes of the Ruſſians, already poliſhed by travel and the beſt maſters, hold them in contempt. *Gentlemen*

tlemen who viſit Ruſſia to pick up money by retailing articles of *gallantry*, are not the beſt maſters of politeneſs; nor are traders of any claſs the beſt models for eaſe and elegance in manners and cuſtoms. Notwithſtanding, however, that theſe gentlemen are miſtaken in being the leaders of faſhion and taſte in Ruſſia, they are of infinite benefit to the lower and middling ranks of the people, who begin to copy after them in many things, and eſpecially in vying with them in arts and in commerce.

The Engliſh and Germans, like the Tartars, by theſe national aſſemblies, wiſh, no doubt, to preſerve their own ſociety and manners pure and unadulterated from the Ruſſian and all other. I am far from meaning to ridicule a ſociety ſo natural as clubs of countrymen in foreign nations, when it is for the purpoſe of being eaſier and happier together than they could be at all times in mixed company: but it is truly ridiculous to find, in thoſe choſen parties, more ſpleen, diſpute, and uproar, than in the mixed clubs and aſſemblies, in which the preſence of ſuperior rank and politeneſs com-

commands respect and sets an example. A heterogeneous collection of adventurers in commerce, pushing their fortunes from the lowest originals; jealous, and contending with each other in all the little arts and meannesses of trade, are not the proper persons to form select clubs for the purposes of being social and happy. They bring the recollection of some contest upon the Exchange with them to their balls: little minds cannot forget such things, even in the midst of social moments. Were I to condescend to mention their vulgar and riotous behaviour upon various occasions, it would expose them to the contempt of the world. The Germans and English, and all other trading foreigners here, ought to esteem it the highest honour to be admitted into the society of the Russian nobles, and gentlemen of Russia; who, possessing as much family pride as the high ranks of other nations, yet knowing it to be the desire of the sovereign and government, condescend to mix with, and to treat even with respect, every foreigner. In return for this condescension, the gentry of the ware-

houſe have ſuppoſed, that it is from the benefit the Ruſſian nobility derive from their more civilized deportment at the dancing aſſemblies, that they are favoured with their company; and that a Ruſſian prince comes to learn the elegant gait and attitude, the graceful ſtep and bow, of a Britiſh retailer of hemp.

I would recommend to thoſe foreigners a more modeſt behaviour. It is a man's greateſt excellence to act well in that profeſſion which his fortune, his choice, and his talents have provided for him. Many of the foreign merchants here are men of ability and integrity: they ought to reflect upon the conſequence of the conduct I have noticed: it is their buſineſs and intereſt to conciliate the eſteem of a nation among whom they are accumulating riches. The Ruſſians are very ſenſible of the benefit they derive from the commerce which thoſe individuals aſſiſt in introducing to the country; and certainly it is for the honour and benefit of the Ruſſians of all claſſes, to give all countenance, and to ſhew every regard for ſuch uſeful members of their ſtate. The Ruſſians of all

ranks

ranks are willing to ſhew this countenance and regard, but are often forced to withhold both, from the petulance and impertinence of thoſe upon whom they beſtow ſuch attention. Whatever benefit may be derived from thoſe ſelect ſocieties by men pinned down by profeſſion or connections to one place, at leaſt the vagrant part of mankind, among which number I muſt reckon myſelf, can derive ſmall advantage.

I did not come here to inform myſelf of the character, the cuſtoms, or the manners of Britons; their ſociety is therefore of no uſe to me. I found various nations here, which I had never ſeen, and with them I aſſociated. Sometimes you would have found me in a Finland hut, converſing by means of an interpreter with the family; ſometimes making love to a Finland or a Ruſſian girl, which needed no interpreter. One day I got half ſeas over with a Ruſſian, the next day with a Coſſac: nothing can be done with the Scythians without the help of brandy.

Whenever any traveller arrived at the poſthouſe, I placed myſelf by his ſide; and having

an interpreter at hand, I enquired of him whatever related to his journey, or to his country. I did not ſatisfy myſelf with this; I took my pencil and delineated his figure, phyſiognomy and dreſs. I apologized for my curioſity, by telling them that their nation and character were equally famous in all parts of the world, and that I wiſhed to carry home with me the pictures of men who did honour to their ſpecies. At my leiſure hours I compared the different converſations with the natives of the ſame country or province, and found no difficulty in diſtinguiſhing by the compariſon truth from falſehood.

You would have ſeen me ſometimes ſitting by the highway; before me paſſed a variety of nations: ſometimes walking with a band of gypſies; at other times journeying with a Ruſſian boor upon a cart: ſometimes examining into the houſehold œconomy of a Finland matron; or ſeated with them at a feaſt upon their ſaint's day. Not a wedding, nor a chriſtening, nor a burial occurred, that I did not attend as punctually as the clerk of the pariſh.

When

When I keep any ſociety with my countrymen, it is with the naval and military officers, with many of whom I am intimately acquainted: from them I obtain the moſt intereſting information at this period of the war; and when they arrive from the ſcene of action, they ſubmit to be examined by me as before a court martial.

Several of them have written journals of the campaign for my uſe, and given me plans of the different engagements. Such ſociety undoubtedly is the moſt proper for travellers, who have it in view to attempt the deſcription of nations and of things moſt inſtructive as well as entertaining to mankind. Such ſociety would be moſt proper for all men; but all men have not opportunity or inclination. The taſk to inform them has devolved as by legacy upon the vagrant and unſettled; or, if you pleaſe, upon thoſe who are nobly inſpired with a thirſt of knowledge; who value wiſdom more than riches; and, accordingly, are ſeldom in poſſeſſion of both.

Beſides the maſquerades and private dancing aſſemblies already noticed, both which ſeem originally Ruſſian amuſements (ſo congenial are they with their diſpoſitions), and are practiſed even among the loweſt orders, there are various clubs which ſerve at the ſame time as ordinaries, coffee-houſes, and concert-rooms: ſome common to the public, others to ſubſcribers only. The public ordinaries are of a very different deſcription from thoſe in England; for as on the one hand there are few taverns or hotels in Ruſſia, that will bear any compariſon with the houſes in that line in Britain; ſo on the other the higheſt claſſes will dine at the ordinaries, where you find at the ſame time both cheap entertainment and elegant ſociety; and into their public ordinary, as well as into the private club-rooms, the company muſt all come, if they mean to dine, at the ſame hour, which in the latitude of Ruſſia and Germany is one o'clock. At this hour too Her Imperial Majeſty ſits down to dinner. I very ſeldom obſerve what we call ſelect companies together: the ſame table

table ſerves every perſon; and you are entertained with converſation in various languages. The genius of the people delights in ſuch meetings: they have no reliſh for retiring with a few friends into a private room, though you would imagine that under an arbitrary government this mode might be more agreeable and ſafe. In England, as if we were afraid of being overheard by ſome Government ſpies, we, for the moſt part, ſhut ourſelves into ſome ſnug room when we go to public-houſes; and even when we go to coffee-houſes, where our moſt open meetings are held, the genius of ſhyneſs and jealouſy ſtill preſides, and various partitions and curtains divide us from each other. A foreigner, who does not know our way, is apt to be taken for a pick-pocket by familiarly ſitting down by the ſide of an Engliſhman in his curtained chamber, and beginning to converſe with him. I gueſs that the coffee-houſe is not originally Engliſh: it is a copy of the foreign ordinary, with additions and improvements ſuited to the recluſe diſpoſitions of

the natives. In England, the diſtinctions among men are moſt obſerved within doors; in Ruſſia and other countries, without doors. The Ruſſians of all ranks delight to mix together, not only in maſquerades, but in other public places. The greateſt reſpect being at all times paid by inferiors to their ſuperiors, the firſt are at no trouble to aſſume dignity and conſequence; but, on the contrary, they are happy at times to hide their ſtars and ribbons under a maſk. In England, matters are arranged otherwiſe: the nobility and gentry are particularly attentive into what company they go. The tickets for aſſemblies, in order to render it difficult for any perſon of inferior rank to procure one, are ſometimes delivered to ladies of the higheſt quality to diſtribute. Thus, our higher claſs endeavour to retaliate upon the lower their want of reſpect and diſtinction for them in public.

Her Imperial Majeſty gives frequent balls at the palace, and once a year a public maſquerade. I can ſee Catharine at her card parties like her ſubjects; ſhe never ſhuts

ſhuts her windows; and the numerous windows and luſtres in a winter's evening have a grand ſhow, and mark the ſpot as the reſidence of majeſty.

The Neva has twice broken its bounds in the courſe of this winter. When the racing-ground had been ſwept, and railed in, the thaw commenced, and the race-ground was diſſolved. The whole round of amuſements was overturned. The Ruſſians ſit very awkwardly in cold ſeaſons in the wheel carriages; and conſider it as the greateſt calamity to be deprived of their ſledges and ice-hills: but for all this they will not part with their ſheep-ſkins and furs. At the beginning of winter the dreſs is fixed for ſix months, without reſpect of thaws, or temperate, mild weather; nay, even in the theatres, which are heated with ſtoves, and where foreigners feel no cold, the Ruſſians ſit in their fur cloaks; and if any accident remove the corners from their ſhoulders, they are careful to replace them. It would be a new ſight to you, to view a powdered beau ſitting *tête-à-tête* in a front box with his *chere amie*, his white head alone

alone appearing prominent amidſt black bears' ſkins.

However tenacious the Ruſſians are of their furs, they part with their hats the moment they enter any houſe: the very gods themſelves, in the upper gallery, which is known here by the name of Paradiſe, are all to *a man* without their bonnets, and as quiet and peaceable as one could wiſh.—What a contraſt between the theatres upon the Continent and an Engliſh one! As we ſurpaſs them in the excellence of our plays, our actors and ſcenery, ſo they excel us in their attention to what is repreſented, and in civility to each other. The upper gallery in an Engliſh theatre is a continued ſcene of riot; in the firſt gallery are frequent diſputes; and even the pit and boxes are not always the regions of politeneſs or ſilence. The fractious and unyielding temper of our countrymen is highly cenſurable, and throws a veil over thoſe good qualities which they pre-eminently inherit. We never take off our hats in the theatres, unleſs during the performance of the play. At the end of each act we replace our hats on our heads,

as

as if we felt uneaſineſs or ſome inferiority without them; and this even in the preſence of our King, although we certainly owe a particular reſpect to thoſe whom our anceſtors have choſen, and whom we have approved for our chief. I muſt give you a ſketch of John Bull in foreign countries; I have witneſſed his adherence to old manners, and I have witneſſed his improvements.

A young Londoner, juſt arrived here, was detected in the Engliſh coffee-houſe reading the newſpapers with his hat on his head. However ſtrange it may appear, his countrymen found fault with it. A placard was ſtuck up on the walls of the coffee-room, giving notice, "That any Engliſh gentleman (none elſe being admitted), entering this room, was deſired to keep his hat off while he remained there." John growled at ſuch an inſult: "I never underſtood," ſaid he, "that ſuch ceremony was requiſite in a coffee-houſe." A gentleman of the commercial houſe of Baron Sutherland replied, "that it was the cuſtom in Ruſſia for every perſon to take off his hat, even upon entering

entering any tradeſman's ſhop." The Engliſhman declared, he never would comply with thoſe ridiculous faſhions, and perſiſted in keeping his hat in *ſtatu quo*; yet ſtretching a point in the cauſe of civility and good manners, he excuſed himſelf upon account of a head-ach.

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LETTER XXXIII.

Ruſſian Ice Hills.—Winter Diverſions.—Travelling Regulations.—Anecdote of a Ruſſian Colonel.—Ceremonies of the Ruſſian Church.—Of the Religion of ancient Scandinavia.

Ingria, April 1791.

WHEN I am tired of Peterſburg, I retire into the country; and when tired of the country, without regarding the ſeaſon of the year, I come into the town. The cuſtoms and manners of the people are to be ſeen at all ſeaſons; and wherever I have the leaſt opportunity to diſcover ſomething new, there is my reſidence.

The winter ſtill comes and goes: I take my morning's walk among the Finland villages, when the ſilver froſt has embroidered the ground. The ſun riſes now at an earlier hour, and promiſes ſummer again to the Ruſſians. The Finlanders are diverting themſelves upon their ice hills: a ſloping hill

hill ſaves them the trouble of erecting them as at Peterſburg. It is here a very ſimple entertainment: the lads and laſſes, ſeated upon pieces of boards, deſcend the hill over the frozen ſnow, which by this exerciſe is rendered ſmooth and hard. At Peterſburg the ice hills are a work of labour and art; four ſtrong beams of wood are fixed in the Neva ice, upon their ends, in the form of a ſquare: the top, which is about thirty or forty feet from the river, is planked and railed at the ſides: from the top a platform is laid with a ſudden deſcent reaching to the river, and about eight or ten feet in breadth: upon this, ſquare pieces of ice are placed, beginning at the bottom; and water thrown upon the icy pavement, ſoon cements the whole into one ſheet of ice: a ladder enables the Ruſſians to mount this ſquare pillar, and from the ſummit they precipitate themſelves upon ſkaits, or upon ſmall wooden machines reſembling a boat. The girls are generally ſeated before the men, who guide the veſſel down the ſlippery way, and which indeed requires the niceſt pilotage: for, notwithſtanding that the platform is railed

railed at the ſides, to ſtrike againſt this rail, conſidering the velocity of their courſe, is equally dangerous as to be toſſed over it. This rapid deſcent gives an equally rapid motion to the veſſel after its arrival at the bottom; and impels it along for ſeveral minutes upon the frozen bed of the river, which is ſwept and railed in to mark the courſe and to keep off the multitude. Oppoſite to the firſt ice hill, and where the railed courſe terminates, another ice hill is erected. Here the Ruſſians again mount, and return to whence they had come: but, to prevent the different parties from meeting in paſſing and repaſſing, a rail divides the courſe, leaving one half for thoſe going, and the other for thoſe returning.

It is admirable to ſee young boys coming down thoſe ſlippery precipices upon one ſkait, with the greateſt eaſe and addreſs: and ſo familiar are ſuch exerciſes to all, that even young children of four and five years of age, not yet taught to ſkait, will nevertheleſs have their ſport; and, throwing themſelves upon their breaſt, hurl their little bodies down the declivity.

I have here received ſeveral invitations to partake of thoſe diverſions. A young handſome Ruſſian girl, obſerving that there would be no danger in placing myſelf beſide her, offered to be my guide, and conduct me ſafe into the valley. I was of another opinion, and that there would be ſome danger in placing myſelf beſide her: I told her ſo. She laughed, and repeated that there would be no danger.—I ventured; the girl held me in her arms. We repeated the race—I became fond of the diverſion; and the charming gill has promiſed, but I don't believe her, that I ſhall run no danger in her arms.

This inconſtant winter occaſions much inconvenience to travellers: if they begin their journey in ſledges upon the ſnow, in a few days the ſnow diſſolves, and their carriages are uſeleſs. They contrive ſometimes, however, to carry the wheels with their ſledges; but this is diſagreeable, and adds much to the weight of their equipage, and to their expence. The poſt regulations are very exact; and according to the ſize of the carriage, and baggage, and number of paſſengers, the

the number of horſes ſpecified muſt be taken and paid for. I have noticed a very diſingenuous conduct, even in many perſons of rank, in regard to thoſe matters. Every traveller muſt have an order for poſt-horſes from the governor of the town from whence he journeys; and in this order is mentioned the ſort of carriage, baggage, and number of horſes required: but a falſe account is for the moſt part given, that an order may be got for as few horſes as poſſible, to evade expence; and this occaſions eternal riots with the poſt-maſters, who, though they have it in their power to act agreeably to regulations lodged with them by government, yet are overawed by perſons of rank.

The poſtmaſter here is an Engliſhman: he is very obſtinate with the Ruſſians and others; and ſometimes he exchanges blows with travellers who may be as obſtinate in inſiſting upon what is wrong, as he upon what is right.

A thundering ſon of Mars was here lately. Without much ceremony he began to chaſtiſe the poſtillions, who all took refuge in

the woods. He then complained to the poſtmaſter, that there was no perſon to drive his carriage. The poſtmaſter reprimanded the colonel for beating the poſtillions, and threatened to ſend the gentleman a priſoner to Peterſburgh, which, he ſaid, his orders fully entitled him to do with any perſon ſtriking a poſtillion while under the eye of the poſtmaſter. The colonel ſtormed, and endeavoured to terrify the poſtmaſter into compliance with his humour: this would not do; and when the officer had calmed, the poſtmaſter ſent for the poſtillions, and they went with the colonel, who firſt came under a promiſe not to abuſe them.

The Ruſſian calendar is crowded with faſt-days; but in winter they continue for ſix weeks at a time. This fortunately happens at a ſeaſon when fiſh is in greater plenty, and cheaper than at any other; and ſuch food alone is uſed during faſt-days. I have no objections to keeping Lent; to abſtain from animal food, and to conſider this as a religious duty: but why do the Greeks and Latins return with ſuch avidity to gormandiſing

difing and drunkennefs? nay, even during faft-days, the priefts as well as laity indulge in potent libations. There is an inconfiftency in affecting to abftain from one or two gratifications of fenfe, while the groffeft appetites are frequently indulged without controul by way of compenfation. There are few religious fects who have not fuch inconfiftencies and abfurdities. That religion which requires few priefts, the inventors of crafty ceremonies, will always be found to be the beft, becaufe fimplicity of manner in worfhip is moft agreeable to the law of nature, and of courfe to the God of nature. A cheerful heart is a prayer: a good confcience adoration. The forms of religious duties fhould be few and fimple, and they will then be fincere. Ceremony has ever been an enemy to fincerity.

Saturday evening laft, I went, accompanied by an acquaintance and a Ruffian naval officer, to the monaftery of St. Sergius. It was to obferve the ceremonies of the Greek church, in commemoration of the refurrection of our Saviour. That monaftery is fituated in a wood upon the fhore of the

gulph of Finland. We proceeded on foot by the edge of the foreſt leading to this ſacred ſpot: it was the dead of night; the weather ſtormy and cold: the moon ſhot her beams through the trees—ſhe had juſt riſen from the plain behind them. We arrived at the wall-gates of St. Sergius, which were ſhut—the monks were aſleep; and the watchman told us we could not obtain admittance but by an order from the ſuperior. One of the monks looked out from the window of his cell; and being ſoon admitted, we were invited by the monk to take ſhelter from the bitter blaſt, under his roof. His bed, ſpread upon a bench, took up the greateſt part of the room: on a ſhelf were placed a few volumes in the Ruſſian language, a loaf of bread and a baſon of milk. He offered to entertain us with what he had. The monks here are not ſo wealthy, and cannot afford to live ſo luxurioufly as they do in other countries. The clock ſtruck one!—the monk croſſed himſelf, and heaved a deep ſigh. We heard the cannon at Peterſburgh announce the glorious moment! The bells of the monaſ-

tery

tery were ſet a-ringing, to give notice to the monks and the neighbouring villagers. We were now allowed to enter the outer hall of the chapel, in which glimmered two or three diſmal tapers, juſt enabling us to ſee a ſacred painting, to which the monks and peaſants bowed, and croſſed themſelves, as they entered. After waiting here a conſiderable time, we were admitted into the chapel, where the prieſt of the white, or clergyman, read the ſervice in a very rapid manner, and the monks or prieſts of the black chanted hymns. On a table was ſpread a picture repreſenting the body of Chriſt. Three monks of the higher orders, dreſſed in their official habits, carried it away as if for interment. From the altar aſcended a cloud of incenſe, and the biſhops taking the ſalver threw the perfume upon the ſacred paintings and among the people. They went in proceſſion to different parts of the monaſtery, throwing incenſe upon the pictures of the ſaints—the people followed. The monks remaining in the chapel, aſſiſted by young boys, chanted hymns. The chapel was lighted up with innumera-

ble wax candles, whofe flame, reflected from the gilded paintings and other ornaments, fhewed the facred magnificence of the place. The howling of the winds without doors, and the tranfient moon-beam, gave additional folemnity to this midnight-fcene.

The chief bifhop prayed, and fung hymns in the inner temple at the altar.—The candles were moftly extinguifhed—the bifhops brought forth the crofs—the people crowded around them to kifs both the crofs and the bifhops. *Chriftus voftus*, *i. e.* Chrift is rifen! refounded from every mouth—the people kiffed one another. The priefts are now fatisfied with harmlefs incenfe. They formerly delighted in fprinkling human blood upon the altars, and the God of mercy was worfhipped by mitred furies, holding up to him the entrails of his creatures! The power which religious fanaticifm has over the minds of the herd of mankind, no doubt gave the firft idea to crowned heads of uniting the offices of prieft and king. Odin was the chief prieft as well as fovereign of the north. The fimple offerings of fruits and flowers were difufed after his arrival,

and

and incenſe produced from offerings more becoming a warrior prieſt and king. The northern prieſts, from this example, covered the altars upon every occaſion with blood. The captives in time of war, or ſlaves in time of peace, were the ordinary victims; but the prieſts were not always ſatisfied with ſuch mean offerings. In great calamities, when the people thought they had ſome occaſion to attribute them to the king, even him they ſacrificed as the higheſt offering in order to obtain divine favour. In this manner, Mallet, the firſt king of Vermland, was burnt in honour of Odin, to put an end to a great dearth, as we read in the Hiſtory of Norway. The kings in their turn did not ſpare the blood of their ſubjects, and many of them even ſhed the blood of their children. Hacon, king of Norway, offered his ſon a ſacrifice to obtain a victory over his enemy Harold. Aune, king of Sweden, devoted to Odin the blood of nine ſons, to prevail on that god to prolong his life. The ancient hiſtory of Norway abounds in ſimilar examples. Theſe victims were either ſtrangled or knocked on the head.

head. The blood flowing from the victims in a greater or lefs quantity prefaged good or bad; and it was fprinkled among the people, upon the facred groves, upon the altars, upon the walls of the temples, and upon the images of their gods.

We returned home about five o'clock in the morning—the fun reddened in the eaft. I went to bed, but was foon awakened from fleep with voices finging along the road. It was a party of Ruffian girls, who gave kiffes and demanded them of every perfon they met. *Chriftus voftus!* re-echoed from every quarter. Thefe rejoicings continued for a week.

Sways are erected in the Ruffian villages: the lads and laffes are feated upon a broad deal board, fufpended horizontally by ropes to a crofs beam above, fixed to two pofts ftuck in the earth. The company fing while they are fawing the air. Two girls ftand, one upon each end of the plank, and give it motion, by preffing the weight of their bodies alternately upon the ends where they are placed. Others get into carts, and drive them about the villages; the young nymphs

nymphs and ſwains exerting their vocal powers in their beſt manner, and clothed in their moſt gaudy trappings. The older people get drunk, and are every where tumbling about the highways; the more ſober are ſeen ſupporting their drunken friends.

LETTER XXXIV.

Contraſt of Climates and Manners.—Peter I. imports foreign Birds into Ruſſia to inhabit the Foreſts.—Of Birds, Natives of Ruſſia.—Ruſſian Climate, and of the beſt Means to preſerve Health in Northern Regions.—Settlements of Europeans in Greenland.

Ingria, May 1791.

THIS is the ſecond winter in which I have trode the Scythian ſnows, and heard rude Boreas thundering around me in his native kingdoms. The ſun is upon his annual viſit to the antarctic pole, and has left us to grope our way amidſt the northern lakes and woods. The arctic hemiſphere is cruſted over with ice; the woods are planted in cryſtal fields; the wild animals with cautious ſteps walk along the ſlippery deſert.

Peter I., as if to cheer the diſmal ſcene ſurrounding his capital city, did not confine his improvements to the earth alone; he imported a variety of birds, natives of ſouthern

ern climates, and gave them the northern ſkies to range in. While the ſummer laſted, they produced a new melody in the Finland woods; but no ſooner did grim winter approach than they fled or periſhed: yet even here, beſides the nightingale, are native ſongſters having the ſweeteſt notes, the black-bird, the thruſh, and, what will amaze you more than all theſe, the Finland ſparrow. This ſpecies of the ſparrow is decorated with the moſt lively and beautifully coloured plumage, and the age of the bird is known by the annual changes in its liveries: their notes are loud and ſhrill; but thoſe I have ſeen being caught when old, I had no opportunity of obſerving if they were eaſily taught to imitate ſounds: their natural ſongs however abundantly repay the charge of keeping them priſoners. They rattle their chains, and make the houſe echo with native woodland ditties.

The vocal performers are not numerous in the northern aërial orcheſtra; and to this ſcarcity may be attributed the ſevere laws againſt the deſtroyers even of rooks: indeed, unleſs

unleſs this ſpecies are very numerous, they are as neceſſary in aërial concerts as baſs players in our operas: nor do I know to which to give preference; to the ſpring muſic of the linnet and the lark, or to the autumnal oratorios of the crows, while I wander through the foreſt. But my favourite bird is the ſnow-bird of Ruſſia, of the ſame family, I preſume, with robin red breaſt. His viſits are limited to the winter ſeaſon. When the nightingale, the linnet, the black-bird, the thruſh, have deſerted the Ruſſians; when the bear and wolf have retreated for ſhelter to their caves; the ſnow-birds, clothed in white robes, undiſtinguiſhable from the powdered buſhes on which they reſt their feet, come in millions, and chirp upon every naked tree and ſhrub. In return for this friendly ſociety, the murderous gun and villanous net are uſed by the human natives to deſtroy them, and the tables of the voluptuary ſmoke with this ſacrifice. The ſnow-bird is of a very ſmall and delicate ſhape, nearly reſembling thoſe from the iſlands of Canary.

The furs and ſtoves bid defiance to cold; an uniform froſt, while the earth is covered with ſnow, is the moſt deſirable weather: the ſnow is the Ruſſian winter carpet; every road is clean and eaſy while it remains, and the air pure and healthful.

The ſeverity of the northern climate is alleviated, not merely by the aid of furs and ſtoves, but by a regimen of diet, which, however, is little attended to by the Ruſſians. It has been found that ſalted meats are the worſt nouriſhment for the inhabitants of northern countries, and yet the northern people are fondeſt of ſalt meſſes. Warm countries produce this pickle: whether it be true, that nature provides in every country food the moſt proper for the inhabitants, I ſhall not decide; but I ſhould think that a very ſmall quantity of ſalt is required for our conſtitution, in all climates.

The Hamburghers, or the Hollanders, at an early period attempted to eſtabliſh colonies of ſeamen in Greenland, for the purpoſe of killing ſeals during winter. The ſailors left there were furniſhed with every

necessary: commodious houses were built; and plentifully stored with all manner of cured provisions, clothes, firewood, &c. The colonists no doubt had enjoyed themselves, carousing within doors, and frequently getting drunk: when the vessels arrived the ensuing season from Holland, the colonists were found dead in their huts, having evidently died of scorbutic diseases, occasioned not less from eating salted meats than from drinking spirituous liquors, and indulging themselves in those lazy habits, the ordinary result of intemperance and of scorbutic affections.

In the last century eight Englishmen were left accidentally by their ships in Greenland, destitute of every necessary, without a house, and with no other clothes than the jackets upon their backs. Necessity, the parent of invention, made a house of their boat: with this, which they placed bottom upwards, securing themselves from the encroachment of cold by boards and moss, they made shift to live with tolerable comfort. A few articles which they had in the boat when separated from the ship, as pieces of

of iron, a hatchet, a muſket, a kettle, &c. enabled them to make ſome other neceſſary implements to dreſs their victuals, and the muſket to kill bears and ſeals, which they fed upon; and hunger made them reliſh thoſe unſavoury meſſes, and without any prior pickling of any kind: but it was this circumſtance, the being deprived of ſalt, which preſerved their lives; the extreme froſt did not require the aſſiſtance of ſalt in curing meats; and if ſalt is prejudicial in cold countries, the inhabitants of them can do very well without it. The Greenland fiſhers arriving in the ſummer found thoſe accidental coloniſts in good health, and as fat and fair as the ſharp climate, and bears' ſurloins with a ſharp appetite could make them.

The Ruſſians ſeveral times attempted in vain to ſettle a few coloniſts in Nova Zembla and Spitſbergen, to which, however, they yearly go in parties to hunt and fiſh. It happened, about thirty or forty years ago, that remaining too long in the country, their veſſels were ſurrounded and frozen in the fields of ice. They fortunately recovered

from their ſhips the moſt conſiderable part of the materials. They conſtructed a houſe, which they underſtood how to ſecure againſt the cold, better than the Engliſh mariners; and beſides that, they knew how to build a ſtove, the only poſſible expedient to preſerve warmth in northern apartments. With all theſe advantages the Ruſſians caſt a lingering look, during the eight long years of their confinement, towards their native country, and to that quarter of the ocean upon which they expected veſſels to appear: the ſhort ſummers ſoon paſſed away, and the winters again involved them in darkneſs and deſpair. They maintained themſelves as well as they could with wild animals caught with ſnares, a method they had learned at home, and which here was very requiſite, as they had but a ſmall quantity of powder: they likewiſe caught in the ſeaſon a ſufficient ſtock of fiſh for the winter. Their ſalt and ſpirits were ſoon expended: the froſt cured their proviſions, and even Ruſſians learned to be healthful and warm without either ſalt or brandy; and although ſeveral

ſeveral died of ſcorbutic habits, which are nouriſhed chiefly by lazineſs, the being deprived of their favourite meſſes and brandy unqueſtionably preſerved the lives of thoſe who remained, at the arrival of a ſhip from Archangel. It is worth recording, that upon their arrival at Archangel, the wife of one of the people, who had long deplored the loſs of her huſband, ſuppoſed to have been loſt at ſea, obſerving, and juſt recollecting her huſband, as he landed, ran up to him and fainted in his arms. Theſe examples prove, in the moſt convincing manner, that the uſe of ſpirituous liquors, as well as of too much ſalt, is prejudicial to the conſtitution in cold countries; and that exerciſe, next to wholeſome proviſions, is the beſt preſerver of every animal's exiſtence.

I do not remember to have noticed any obſervation in regard to what is the warmeſt dreſs for the human or other bodies. I think that a coat or covering of feathers would exceed, in warmth, any other clothing. I draw this concluſion from the circumſtance of the ſnow-bird

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wandering through the coldeſt ſkies, and even delighting in them, while the wildeſt quadruped that treads the northern deſert ſeeks ſhelter in the caves of mountains or in the receſſes of the foreſt. This clothing could not be fitted to the human body ſo conveniently as our linens, cottons, ſilks, and woollens, and the furs of quadrupeds. This muſt be the reaſon that the northern nations are not clothed *à la mode des oiſeaux*. Were the feathered creation generally as large in ſize as quadrupeds, and could they be ſtripped of the ſkin and feathers in the ſame manner as quadrupeds of their ſkin and hair, it would then be equally commodious to wear the one or the other. Furs would be of ſmall uſe, if the hair was torn from the ſkin, however ingeniouſly it might be put upon woollen cloth or other ſtuff: the feathers or hair once diſplaced can never aſſume again the elegance and warmth which the hand of nature gave them.

But why do I lecture upon heat to a Briton, who deſpiſes all warmth, unleſs what he derives from political diſcuſſions

upon the nature of liberty? He perſiſts in following the example of his anceſtors, who marched naked: we are ſtill naked though not painted Britons. Even the Britiſh ladies will not wear a fur cloke; yet, as if they wiſhed to ſhew that they meant no diſreſpect to old Winter, they take notice of him as he paſſes; they pay him the compliment to wear an edging of fur round their gowns, and condeſcend too to wear a muff. The winter dreſs of Britons is rather the etiquette of faſhion than clothing. We are almoſt aſhamed to appear in a great coat. There is a conſiderable degree of foppery as well as hardineſs in this cuſtom; and I believe that moſt of our young men of faſhion would have no objection to a comfortable great coat, if they did not conſider this appendage as hiding their elegant perſons too much from public view. In walking, a great coat is leſs neceſſary; but in an open carriage, unleſs the weather is warm, it is abſolutely ſo, when the body has little exerciſe, and the cold is increaſed by moving quickly, eſpecially if the wind be in our

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face. Our charioteers, however, hang their great coats upon the back of their gigs, to ſhew at leaſt that their diſuſe of clothes is not a ſtratagem to ſave money, or with any view to cheat the taylor or the manufacturer of employment. The many diſeaſes originating in theſe fooliſh practices among my countrymen, make the ſubject intereſting, and induce me to dwell the more particularly upon it.

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LETTER XXXV.

Contraſt of Character of different Nations—the Engliſh—the Germans—the Ruſſian Men and Women.—Cuſtoms and Manners of the Ruſſians.—Erroneous Opinions of ſeveral Writers reſpecting the Character of the Ruſſians.

St. Peterſburg, May 1791.

THIS metropolis is a collection of all nations—of native Scythians, and of the deſcendants of the ancient Scythians, who emigrated from their country, and are now returning back in ſmall parties under their new names, of Engliſh, Scotch, Germans, &c.

The original inhabitants, who ſtill remain in Scythia, ſtare at their brethren, who have learned various arts, invented by the neceſſities to which their vagrant emigrations naturally ſubjected them. Their *fathers* wonder at the improvements of theſe travellers, and copy from their ſons. They

are cutting down their foreſts, and building cities; tilling the ground, ſowing and reaping. The coarſe ſkins of animals are exchanged for clothing of woollen manufacture.

It is a curious contraſt, to ſee upon one hand the European artiſt working with numerous and the fineſt tools, and the Scythian conſtructing every thing he wants with the ax and hammer only. He fells the trees and builds a houſe in the courſe of a day or two; he furniſhes it with equal expedition. His veſſels are conſtructed and launched as if by magic. What then is the ſuperiority of European arts? Luxury puts in a word, and illuſtrates theſe advantages. Ambition ſeconds her with powerful arguments.

Conſidering the ſhortneſs of life, we have put ourſelves to a vaſt trouble in contriving conveniences we are not to enjoy. Were we contented with ſimplicity, we might have more time to ſtudy the beſt of all arts and ſciences, moral wiſdom. But the tide of eaſe, and elegance, and taſte, as they are called, is not to be ſtemmed: ſo, taking the world as it goes, I will quietly embark upon

on this fashionable stream, and away as the current drives me.

Men possess various characters, as government, climate, and other circumstances give the inclination. Women, more uniformly occupied in one pursuit, that of household œconomy and the care of their children, have more uniform characters; and as they are naturally more mild in their disposition, they have every superiority to us in those arts which render society most agreeable. The contrast betwixt the husband and wife of Russia is striking: conceive to yourself a young lamb in the paws of a bear; I speak of the common ranks: yet the Russian is very amorous, and as fond and placable as his nature will admit.

Marriage would be the happiest of all states, if it were possible to have a wife as handsome as the English and German, and as mild and loving as the Russian ladies.

The Russian husband, with all his boorishness, is not so anxious to shew his authority as the wife to shew her obedience. It is rather distressing to see the meek creature carefully picking her steps behind those of

her bearded lord; watching his looks, and actuated by the ſame pains and pleaſures. The amorous complexion of the Ruſſian males for their women renders this haughty demeanour unaccountable. How ſhall we explain the myſtery? I ſuppoſe it ariſes from the ancient form of patriarchal government. As the Ruſſians are fond huſbands, their importance is no doubt rather aſſumed from cuſtom than inclination.

It is a curſed cuſtom which obliges a man to aſſume a diſtance from the lovely partner of his life; but if wives, thus treated, are the mildeſt and moſt obedient, the cuſtom will not ſeem ſo abſurd. The truth is however, that cuſtom, more than any diſtinction in the nature of mankind, regulates every thing. An Engliſh woman is not bred up from her infancy to live in fear of awful man: a Ruſſian woman is taught from her childhood her inferiority to the male: an Engliſh woman will not therefore ſubmit to the ſame treatment from her huſband; nor will harſh treatment have the ſame effect upon her as upon the Ruſſian wives.

The

The married women in this country, to ſhew that they have quitted the vanities of the ſex upon their wedding-day, tie up ever afterwards their flowing hair beneath the napkin, which is the univerſal head-dreſs. However, they preſerve the right of ornamenting their clothes with gold lace, and are very fine on holidays. It would appear that to be fat, is eſteemed to be beautiful; the married are generally as round as good living can make them: this habit of body certainly defends from the cold, and thereby ſerves a double purpoſe.

The Ruſſians, like all Aſiatic nations, are full of compliment and ceremony. A common boor will continue half an hour recording your titles, and loading you with his good breeding. This ſeems inconſiſtent with his rough manners: he cannot help his awkwardneſs and roughneſs in the midſt of all this: his awkwardneſs is the quality of his body; his civility the quality of his mind: or, let it be granted, that his ceremonious civility, like that of more civilized nations, is without any meaning, the Ruſſians are not worſe than they are. The

women

women are ſtill more civil than the men; their diſcourſe from beginning to end is one continued compliment: they ſalute you at every period by bowing their head; and continue ſmiling, and talking, and bowing, not knowing when or where to ſtop.

There is one circumſtance much to be regretted; the prevailing cuſtom of painting their faces: it hides a lively and animated countenance as with a maſk: and even the ſallow hue given them by the heat of their ſtoves, would, with the aid of ſuch animation, be more inviting than the plaſtered viſage acquired by the uſe of rouge.

What is remarkable, while the Ruſſian female is whitening and reddening her cheeks, ſhe is at the ſame time employed in blackening her teeth; which have, from this abominable practice, the moſt diſguſting appearance, and give the idea of diſeaſe every time they open their mouths. When I aſked them the reaſon, they ſaid it was the faſhion of their country; and others replied, that the teeth of brute animals were white. I have been told, that the Hindoo ladies affect to have their teeth black. To paint

paint red and white is an attempt to imitate the colours of health; but the black tint has no reference to tafte, or reafon, or life. Such is the flavery of fafhion or old cuftom, in high as well as in low life.

The Ruffian women are very fmall in ftature, yet neat and handfome while unmarried; and at all ages cleanly in their perfons. They are as proud of fmall feet as the Chinefe ladies; and they are poor indeed, who have not clean white ftockings every day. This people, men and women, are no way anxious, like other northern nations, to difplay their hardinefs by going without clothes: the female, lefs expofed than the man, is more flightly habited; yet due attention is paid by the women of all ranks to defend themfelves from the feverity of the climate.

Moft writers upon this nation have defcribed them as poffeffing rather paffive than active valour. It is fo far true, that the Ruffian foldier is paffive in refpect to the orders of his general, and knows not how to difobey: but every one acquainted with them knows with what joy they receive an order

order to march to an attack. Paſſive valour may anſwer in the open field of battle, army againſt army; but in ſcaling walls ſomething more is required. I need only mention Oczakow and Iſmael to bring to every one's recollection the active courage of the Ruſſians. In fact, they have ſomething more than active courage, and poſſeſs too great a degree of ferocity. A Ruſſian peaſant and a Ruſſian ſoldier are very different beings: the former never receives an order for an attack to give him the opportunity of diſplaying his natural diſpoſition; and his paſſiveneſs in a ſituation he cannot mend by active virtues, has given him a fictitious appearance and a fictitious character.

A Ruſſian, in the habit from his infancy to look upon his lord and emperor as gods, has no more idea of breaking this chain of thought, than a priſoner of breaking the ſtrongeſt real chains with which every limb is riveted. Both the peaſant and the priſoner may, notwithſtanding this, inherit very active diſpoſitions.

LETTER XXXVI.

Of the most celebrated Travellers to the North.—Account of Lapland and of the Laplanders.—Climate of Lapland—Houses—Provisions.—Reflections upon the best Method of improving and cultivating barbarous Nations.—Lapland Commerce.—Manner of Travelling.

May 1791.

TARTARY is the mother country of Europe, and particularly of the northern parts: the natives of Tartary form the first shade; those of the banks of the Wolga and the middle regions of Siberia, the second; and the inhabitants of Lapland, of Samoieda, Jakutza and the other countries upon the Frozen Ocean, the third and darkest shade. Removed from the eye of the civilized nations of Europe, little is known concerning them. Here are few productions to invite, and the difficulty of communication,

munication prevents the intercourſe with foreigners. Commercial intercourſe, which has opened all nations to each other, is ſhut by frozen ſeas or by immenſe deſerts. Mankind have found out the abodes of mankind in ſearching for gold and ſilver, not from a thirſt of knowledge: it is Philoſophy which has explored ſhores and wilderneſſes where knowledge alone is to be found. M. Gmelin, M. Pallas, Muller, Steller, and Kraſkeninicoff, have explored, at the deſire and at the expence of Her Imperial Majeſty, the northern deſerts of Siberia and Kamtſchatka. Linnæus, Maupertuis, Thrud, Leem, Le Monnier, and Jutterberg, have given the beſt accounts of Lapland. It is chiefly from the accounts of theſe writers, and from perſonal converſation with other travellers into Siberia, that I have drawn anecdotes of the people of that country.

Ruſſia, when it added a part of Swediſh Finland to its territory, added likewiſe a proportion of the rocks and ſnow of Swediſh Lapland bordering upon the White Sea. Lapland, the utmoſt extremity of Scandinavia,

navia, is divided between Denmark, Sweden, and Ruſſia: the inhabitants are a diſtinct people from the Ruſſians, Swedes, and Danes. Conceive to yourſelf a country formed as it were by a collection of mountains from all the other parts of the world, and covered, or rather loaded, with ice and ſnow, from the pole—this is Lapland. Conceive too the moſt uncouth ſquat figure poſſible, clothed in dirty ſkins of beaſts—this is the Laplander. But this country, ſay the natives, was the paradiſe in which our firſt parents dwelt, and from which all nations have their origin. Placed upon the top of the globe, they eſteem themſelves *above* all mankind. They are of divine origin! Probably the gods of the ancients were ſupplied from Lapland: their chief arts at this day prove them of celeſtial breed: they are manufacturers of thunder, lightning, hail, and ſtorms. With all theſe accompliſhments, the rein-deer is certainly the moſt valuable and reſpectable inhabitant of Lapland.

The Laplanders, entirely unacquainted with

with agriculture, are all huntſmen and fiſhermen. Their ſouthern maſters have made ſeveral fruitleſs attempts to cultivate the natives and their ſoil: not only their prejudices, but the pole muſt be removed, before they can ſucceed in either attempt. It has been obſerved by one of the writers upon Lapland, that Nature, carefully overlooking her works, and that none of them, however barren and unhoſpitable, be altogether deſerted, has certainly directed the flight of innumerable birds of paſſage to Lapland in ſummer. But how ſhall we account for the reſidence of men in theſe frozen regions? how ſhall we account for the preference which the human natives give this country to all others? It is poſſible to entice the Italian from Italy, but not the Laplander from his mountains, rocks, and wreaths of ſnow. The German, the Spaniard, the Portugueſe, the French, and even the Briton, is for ever changing his country. Is this a proof that nature is beſt ſatisfied with ſimplicity or with luxury? Were ſimplicity of manners accompanied with cleanlineſs of perſon

perſon and dreſs, and free from grovelling ſuperſtition; ſuch ſituation perhaps would be moſt enviable, and moſt conſiſtent with the nature of happineſs.

A winter of nine months' continuance forbids every attempt to cultivate the ſoil; which, beſides, is poor and thin. The Laplanders too, approving themſelves the genuine deſcendants of the Tartars, deteſt agricultural labours. The Swediſh government placed ſmall colonies of farmers in that quarter of Lapland belonging to it: they cleared the grounds, they tilled and ſowed, but did not reap. They diſtreſſed the natives by ſetting the woods on fire, the ſhelter of the beaſts upon which they greatly depend for ſubſiſtence, as well as deprived them of a neceſſary, and the only fuel they have. The intentions of the Swedes were humane; but it is impracticable to render the Laplanders any ſervice in this way: it remains only to aſſiſt them in making their ſituation as comfortable as their country and climate will admit of.

June, July, and Auguſt, are the only

months during which the lands are without a covering of ſnow, and the lakes and rivers, of ice. This is conſequently the ſeaſon of grazing their herds, and for fiſhing. The rivers produce great variety of fiſh, and the ocean upon their coaſts ſuch as furniſh oil, uſed by the natives both as food, and for their lamps to light up within their huts the dreary winter.

With September winter approaches: the ſnowy ſhowers and chilling froſts again take poſſeſſion of the land and ſeas. The herds of rein-deer are folded, and the Laplander kindles a fire in his hut to warm himſelf. The conſtruction of their huts does no credit to the ingenuity of the natives, who in ſome other inſtances diſcover a conſiderable degree of ability. The Lapland winter hut is exactly the figure of a cone or ſugar loaf, conſtructed by means of poles ſtuck in the earth, forming a circle and inclining nearly to a point at the top: theſe poles are covered upon the outſide with moſs and earth, and towards the bottom to a great thickneſs. Snow and ice is the laſt ſlating which the

the hut receives. The inhabitants have not always ſufficient room to ſtand upright within theſe awkward manſions; and, to add to their inconvenience, they are involved in a continued cloud of ſmoke, the eſſence of wet fuel. The fire is made directly under an aperture at the top of the hut, which ſerves rather to let in the cold, than to let out the ſmoke. The door is a ſmall hole at the lower ſide of the hut, through which the Laplander and his family enter or go out upon all fours. This family, rolled up in furs, ſleep around the fire, fomented with the ſmoke and various ſcents incloſed in their lodging. Their winter proviſions, conſiſting of fiſh, whale oil, and the fleſh of wolves, elks, and bears, being cellared in the corner of the hut, afford very delicious flavours: but all this, the ſmoke no doubt excepted, is Lapland luxury; and when compared to what is called luxury in other parts of the world, it will puzzle the moſt profound naturaliſt to decide which is which. By luxury are certainly meant increaſed enjoyments of whatever ſort we

think ſweeteſt to our ſenſes. The luxuries of poliſhed nations have effeminated them, and with increaſed momentary fits of happineſs have increaſed their diſeaſes, and ſhortened the period of their lives. The luxury of a Laplander is, to be wrapped in furs during winter, to ſcorch ſome favourite part of his body at the fire, to eat bears' fleſh, and to drink whale oil: as theſe luxuries do not increaſe his diſeaſes, nor ſhorten the period of his exiſtence, I ſhould, for my own part, eſteem the Lapland luxury the beſt.

It is a grand rule among politicians, that to make a people induſtrious the beſt method is, to increaſe their wants, by giving them a taſte for ſomething they did not know of before. It might however have been a prudent conduct in the Ruſſians, Danes, and Swedes, to have conſidered, firſt, what was in the power of the Laplanders to obtain by additional induſtry. Without conſidering this circumſtance, the ſame political rule may deſtroy one people while it raiſes another. For inſtance, the ſoil

ſoil of Lapland, of the countries bordering upon the Northern ocean, Samoyedi, Tungouſi, Yukaghiri, to the fartheſt corners of the European and Aſiatic continent to the north and eaſt, Tchuktchi, Thoriaki, and Kamtſchatka, are either altogether barren, or rendered by climate next to incapable of cultivation. I cannot perceive the propriety of introducing unknown luxuries into ſuch countries, in exchange for which the inhabitants have nothing to ſpare, and can have nothing to ſpare even after the greateſt exertions of induſtry. The three northern governments are highly culpable in permitting traders to enter among the natives of the pole. Nature has beſtowed upon them a little; with that little they are ſatisfied, and they cannot have more, without parting with what makes them happy, in exchange for what makes them wretched.

A brandy merchant arrives in the northern deſerts: his arrival is announced in every hut and village. The inhabitants crowd around him as a deity: they return repeatedly to their ſtores for the furs which the

the hardſhips of many a long chaſe has procured to them: they give the moſt valuable furs for as much brandy as they can drink in a few minutes. They next give away the ſkins they uſe for clothing; and the fiſh, their proviſion in winter, for another and another draught of brandy. The merchant demands a greater quantity of articles for his poiſon, as the thirſt of his cuſtomers increaſes; and many of them are unable to purchaſe the ſmalleſt quantity of meal, having expended their whole riches upon this bewitching liquor; and given away furs from two to ten and twenty pounds value each for three or four ſhillings worth of brandy.

The introduction of luxuries, being attended with ſuch fatal effects, ought inſtantly to be prohibited. The reſpective governments may render the natives much ſervice, without urging them either to agricultural employments, or to drink brandy. To build for them convenient huts and villages; and to force the people, if neceſſary, to dwell in ſuch; encouraging them at the

ſame time by the example of ſettlers mixed with them, to domeſtic comfort and cleanlineſs, would be worthy the attention of the cabinet of the moſt mighty empire. Theſe ſettlers would find abundance of employment in ſupplying the natives with meal and a few other neceſſaries; and to which articles this commerce ſhould be ſtrictly limited. The natives of the Pole might be rendered happy at a ſmall expence; and the revenue in furs, which they do at preſent and can afford to give, would abundantly repay their ſovereigns. Ruſſia, Sweden, and Denmark have large tracts of land uncultivated in temperate climates; let theſe be cultivated before thay break up the ſoil beyond the arctic circle; and where the ſoil and climate invite culture, they may apply with leſs danger luxury as a ſtimulus to the huſbandman. Yet, perhaps, if luxury were baniſhed every climate; or, if happineſs were ſought after as the only and beſt luxury; increaſed population might anſwer the purpoſe of a ſtimulus, when there was a full demand for all products; and increaſed po-

 pulation

pulation muſt neceſſarily ſucceed when other luxuries are baniſhed, ſince theſe have notoriouſly deſtroyed the generative faculties of the body, as well as thoſe of the mind.

The Laplander has few things to ſpare: a little oil and fiſh, ſome furs and wooden utenſils; in the making of which, having very ordinary inſtruments, they ſhew much ingenuity. What they have to ſpare, and ſomething more, they exchange with the Swedes and Danes, chiefly for brandy and other liquors; and, beſides giving a very high value, conſume a great deal of time, and undergo great fatigue and danger to obtain them.

The Laplanders are not entirely ſhut up in their huts during winter; they venture abroad at times to catch the bear, who at this ſeaſon lies dozing in his cavern. Others, ſtill more adventurous, journey in ſledges drawn by rein-deer, acroſs the frightful mountains ſeparating Lapland from Norway and Sweden, and carry various articles to market. If we are to cre-

dit

dit Lænius, from the ſpecimens he has given the world of Lapland poetry, the Laplanders hazard too the moſt perilous and diſtant journies to viſit their ſweet-hearts.

> " Haſte, haſte, my rein-deer ! let us quickly go
> Our am'rous journey o'er the dreary waſte:
> Haſte, my rein-deer ! ſtill, ſtill, thou art too ſlow,
> Impetuous love demands the lightning's haſte."
>
> SPECTATOR.

Le Monnier thus relates a journey in a ſledge drawn by rein-deer: " The machine " this animal draws is a ſort of boat, ſcarce " large enough to hold the half of one's " body. As this travelling in the ſnow is " a kind of navigation; that the veſſel " may ſuffer the leſs reſiſtance in its courſe, " it has a ſharp head, and a keel like an or- " dinary boat, upon which it tumbles or " rolls from ſide to ſide. If the traveller is " not very attentive to the management of " the ſledge, and keeping himſelf properly " balanced in his ſeat, he is in danger " every moment of being thrown out. The " rein-deer is harneſſed to the ſledge by a " ſingle thong of leather made faſt to the

" animal's

"animal's neck. When he finds himſelf
"upon a beaten road he runs with incredi-
"ble fury: it is needleſs to attempt to ſtop
"him in his career; and to pull the reins
"which are fixed to his horns. This ſerves
"but to render him more furious, to run
"out of the road, or to kick at you with his
"heels. In the laſt event, the perſon in the
"ſledge turns it over himſelf as a buckler
"againſt this aſſault; or elſe by drubbing
"the rein-deer with a ſtick, which at the
"ſame time is neceſſary to direct the ſledge,
"and to keep it clear of the trunks of trees.

"The firſt part of our journey from the
"hut was performed in a moment; the
"motion of the ſledge was quick as the
"flight of birds; and although there was
"no beaten track upon the mountain's ſide,
"yet we were carried to its top very ra-
"pidly. The rein-deer, while we remain-
"ed, dug deep holes in the ſnow with their
"hoofs, and browſed the moſs upon the
"rocks beneath it. The Laplander made
"a great fire, but the cold was ſo exceſſive,
"that

" that the heat could reach but a ſmall diſ-
" tance; and though it melted the ſnow
" immediately around, this was again ſoon
" frozen into a hearth of ice.

" If our journey up hill had been pain-
" ful, our concern now was, leſt our re-
" turn down ſhould be too rapid. The de-
" ſcent was ſteep; and the ſledge, though
" partly ſunk among the ſnow, ſlid of itſelf.
" Imagine to yourſelf our ſituation, drawn
" along by the ſame furious animals; which
" ſinking in the ſnow to their bellies, en-
" deavoured to ſave themſelves by their
" fleetneſs. We ſoon found ourſelves at
" the bottom of the hill; and in a moment
" afterwards, we had paſſed the great river,
" and come to the place from whence we
" had ſet out: we made haſte to get back
" to the Torneo; which at our arrival, 30th
" December, had a moſt frightful appear-
" ance. The little houſes were buried in
" ſnow; which, if there had been any day-
" light, muſt have effectually ſhut it out.
" The ſnow continually falling, or ready to
" fall, hid the ſun for the few moments he

" remained above the horizon. In January the cold was increaſed to ſuch an extremity that M. Reaumur's thermometer, " which at Paris in the great froſt 1709 " it was thought ſtrange to ſee fall to 14° " below the freezing point, was now got " down to 37°. The ſpirit of wine in the " others froze. If we opened the door of " a warm room, the external air inſtantly " converted the vapour of it into ſnow, " whirling it round in white vortexes. If " we went out, we felt as if the air was " tearing our breaſts aſunder. The ſolitude " of the ſtreets was not leſs than if the inhabitants had been all dead. In this country, you may often ſee people who have " had a leg or an arm frozen off. Sometimes the cold, always very great, increaſes to ſuch ſudden and violent fits, as " are generally fatal to thoſe who happen " to be expoſed to it. At other times, " tempeſts of ſnow ariſe ſtill more dangerous: the winds, ſeeming to blow from " every quarter at once, toſs about the ſnow " with

" with ſuch fury that in a moment all the
" roads are loſt."

Such is a Lapland winter! The ſoul is chilled with the idea of it, and retreats to more hoſpitable climes.

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LETTER XXXVII.

Account of Lapland continued.—New Code of Laws.—Natural Hiſtory of the Rein-deer, the moſt uſeful Animal of the Brute Creation.—Cuſtoms and Manners of the Laplanders.—Error of M. Maupertuis.—Lapland Manufactures.—Of wild Animals common to this Country.—Specimen of Lapland Poetry.—Economy of Nature.—Manner of Fiſhing and Hunting—Cookery—Diſeaſes.—Plan to render the Laplanders more comfortable in their native Country.

Ingria, May 1791.

I HAVE got into a talking humour about Lapland: this country and its inhabitants, at a very early period of life, attracted my attention; I ſearched for every information relating to them: I hope ſoon to view them with my eyes. I will ſolicit her Imperial Majeſty

Majeſty to make me prince and governor of Lapland, and be ſatisfied with a very ſmall revenue: in return I will teach them to be truly happy, even in the midſt of their ſnows. As a ſpecimen of my legiſlative abilities, the following laws and regulations ſhall inſtantly take place upon my appointment.

1ſt. The books of laws and government of all other nations, imported or ſmuggled into Lapland, to be forfeited to the prince, and carefully locked up by him in a ſtrong iron cheſt, which ſhall be called *Pandora's Box*: theſe books never to be read or removed, nor the name of the box changed, until the nations they relate to can demonſtrate that they are happy, and in conſequence of the ſtrict obſervance and execution of their laws.

2dly. The importation of brandy and all ſpirituous and intoxicating liquors prohibited upon pain of death.

3dly. The Laplanders ſhall have freedom in the utmoſt extent of that word: their old laws, religion, cuſtoms and manners.

ners. Their prince ſhall only endeavour to prevail upon them to alter theſe when they are evidently wrong or filthy, by placing among them young Laplanders educated under his own inſpection, and whoſe examples they will undoubtedly follow, when they ſee how much happier the change in their houſehold accommodations, their dreſs and manners; comparing them to the circumſtances in which they had themſelves ſeen the young Laplanders before they had been taken to be educated.

4thly. All ſucceeding princes ſhall, under forfeiture of the crown, obſerve and confine themſelves to the above three *regulations*, and never make any alterations or additions whatever, until a general aſſembly is held in Lapland, of one repreſentative from every nation upon earth; and unleſs a majority of theſe can agree in two points, what is happineſs and what is liberty, the *three regulations* ſhall ſtill remain in force. This I am determined ſhall conſtitute my whole code of laws, and the only addition to thoſe ſimple ones which the natives already have

among them. Murder is puniſhed by death; theft by reſtoring the property ſtolen or its value, and moſt other crimes by the ſhame and infamy attending the detection of them. To the honour of many of the northern nations, the accuſtomary oath among them was, "May ſhame be my puniſhment if I lie!" This oath regarded giving teſtimony in whatever cauſe their evidence was demanded.

Perhaps it may be deemed a ſymptom of tyranny, that, in writing of my kingdom in expectancy, I begin the hiſtory of the brute animal creation in Lapland, in preference to the hiſtory of human animals. I will not affect to deny, that the rein-deer, in the preſent ſtate of things, muſt remain, for ſome time, the moſt reſpectable of my ſubjects; and without forcing him to ſpeak, I may draw from his hiſtory and example inſtruction to mankind, and in particular to my intended ſubjects.

The rein-deer is a varying ſpecies of the deer kind peculiar to Lapland: they are the chief dependence and riches of the Laplanders,

landers, and are eſteemed by them as money is by other nations. The rein-deer are the Laplander's horſes; they draw their carts and ſledges: they are their cows; they live upon their fleſh and their milk: they are their ſheep; they are clothed with their ſkins: and their gods too; the rein-deer ſtar is worſhipped by the Laplanders. In their ſolemn ſacrifices the horns of the rein-deer are offered as the moſt precious gift. The ancients gave place to their heroes, the murderers of mankind, among the ſtars. I will ſay nothing of the comparative merits of the rein-deer and the hero, for apartments in the ſkies.

The food of the rein-deer is moſs; and here nature has provided for them abundance of this vegetable: but the frozen ſnow, during the long winter, covering it to ſuch a depth, renders it very difficult to be had at this ſeaſon: the Laplanders are therefore very careful in gathering and preſerving the moſs for their herds; they treat it nearly in the ſame manner as we do hay, making it up into ricks in autumn. They take from

theſe ricks, after it has ſufficiently dried, ſuch a quantity within doors, as may ſerve a week. This moſs hay is firſt waſhed in boiling water, before it is given to cows or ſheep: it is beſides mixed with a little ſalt and meal, to render it palatable to animals that have not been accuſtomed to ſuch provender. The moſs, thus prepared, becomes very nouriſhing and wholeſome: the mutton fed with it is very ſweet and juicy, and the milk of the cows is greatly increaſed. Neither cows nor ſheep are natives of Lapland; they are imported from Norway, Sweden, or Ruſſia; and although, in ſummer, parts of the country produce a little graſs, they could never ſurvive the winter without this care and method for their ſuſtenance.

The rein-deer requires not this care in regard to food. He prefers eating the moſs when it is fulleſt of juices, which would kill the other animals; and rather than eat the dried moſs with meal and ſalt, he greedily ſeizes every opportunity, when out of doors, to ſearch for his favourite provender, in its

primitive ftate, and, removing the fnow with his hoofs, certainly finds it. He fmells the mofs, however deeply buried under the fnow, and never digs where it is not to be found. When the weather permits in winter, the herdfmen take the rein-deer to the field: if they refufe to dig, he knows that no mofs is in it, and conducts them to others, until the rein-deer ftop of themfelves and dig. This practice faves the hay for fevere weather, when the herds cannot with fafety be allowed to go abroad; to fuch extremes of cold is this country expofed. Sometimes the mofs is fcarce in the fields, and the hay of confequence exhaufted at home. This is the only circumftance which obliges the Laplander to kill this ufeful animal; and when they can no longer provide milk, butter, and cheefe to their mafter, they yield up their life.

This noble creature not only ferves every purpofe which the brute creation anfwer to mankind, but in feveral inftances is his guardian and advifer. In the long journies to Ruffia, Sweden, and Norway, during the

cold ſeaſon, the Laplanders are frequently involved in thoſe whirlwinds of ſnow deſcribed by M. Maupertuis: the ſagacious rein-deer ſmells the coming ſtorm: he ſhews expreſſive ſigns of fear, and proceeds with reluctance. The Laplander knows the value and truth of this prediction, and flies with his cattle to the firſt ſhelter, where, kindling a fire, he remains all night, or until the rein-deer ſhews an inclination to continue the journey; for theſe animals are anxious to go forward; no fatigue jades them, if the maſter allows them even a very moderate ſhare of reſt and proviſion. Theſe journies are inconceivably dangerous: not only the whirlwinds are to be dreaded, but the precipices in the country are ſometimes ſo diſguiſed with the ſnow as not to be diſcovered. In journeying down a ſteep deſcent the rein-deer is placed behind the ſledge, and the ſledge runs of itſelf. The Laplander guides himſelf, in a country where there are no roads, by the ſtars, which ſerve to him as road poſts; and while the rein-deer is carrying him over the earth, the

rein-deer ſtar in heaven directs his courſe.

As the rein-deer is the chief wealth of the Laplanders, ſo he is, alſo, the only animal, except a few cows and ſheep, that is domeſticated: the herds will ſometimes amount to ſeveral thouſands. Few of the inhabitants have leſs than 40 or 50 in their herds. The Laplanders are leſs afraid of any perſonal evil to themſelves, than of accidents and diſeaſes to their rein-deer. This uſeful animal is in the ſummer ſeaſon grievouſly afflicted by the muſquitoes or gnats that ſwarm at this ſultry ſeaſon of the year. Theſe inſects drop their eggs among the hair upon the rein-deer's back; the egg quickly produces a worm, which working itſelf into the ſkin finds a lodging, to the great torment of the deer. At this unfortunate ſeaſon, too, the rein-deer ſheds his horns, and is thereby prevented from freeing himſelf of his tormentors. Senſible of the approaching danger, and of his incapacity to rub his enemy from their lodgements, he flies, his laſt reſource, to the mountain tops,

where

where the winter's cold is in part preſerved. This climate is not viſited by the gnat; or if ſome, more daring than ordinary, purſue the rein-deer even to his laſt retreat, he ſees the coming foe, pricks up his ears, ſhakes his body, his head and his tail, and, ſnorting with the utmoſt violence, endeavours thus to frighten away the winged ſcorpions. He continues here, upon the defenſive, for ſeveral days, nay for weeks together. He ſubmits to remain in thoſe cold quarters, and to the pangs of hunger, inſenſible to every torment but the gnat. It is only the wild rein-deer, however, that has it in his power to fly to the mountains: the others are carefully watched in ſummer, leſt they likewiſe ſhould take the ſame journey; yet the ſtupid Laplander uſes no means for their relief. It is recommended by M. Juterbeg to anoint the bodies of the rein-deer, with a liquid compoſed of tar and milk: he adds, that the Laplanders uſe this preparation upon their ſkins, to defend themſelves. It is wonderful indeed that they do not apply a remedy, found beneficial to their own

bodies, to their favourite rein-deer. "It is probable," ſays M. Juterbeg, "that the inſect "would cautiouſly avoid truſting its eggs "to ſuch a prepoſterous matrix, for every "thing that is fat becomes mortal to inſects "by obſtructing their pores." The backs of the rein-deer, and no doubt of the bear and other animals, are ſuppoſed to nouriſh the chryſalis of the gnat during winter; but ſurely the ſkins of all the quadrupeds in the creation could not contain thoſe myriads of gnats which take wing in ſummer—the ſky frequently becomes dark, obſcured by a cloud of inſects. I have witneſſed this in the more ſouthern parts of Ruſſia; and as the heat of a Lapland ſummer exceeds that of Ruſſian Ingria, the effects muſt be greater. I think the remedy of tar and milk might free the rein-deer of this diſeaſe, but not the northern climate of gnats. M. Maupertuis ſays, that he obſerved the ſurface of a lake in Lapland ſo covered with little yellowiſh grains, the ſize of a millet, that the water was diſcoloured with them. He took this for the chryſalis of ſome inſect, which he fancied

fancied was one kind of thoſe flies which infeſted the rein-deer. This is a ſtrange conjecture of M. Maupertuis. The flying fiſh is the only production of the waters, in my recollection, which viſits the airy regions. The hairy backs of quadrupeds, and the cold ſurface of the lakes, are two ſuch oppoſite nurſeries, that we cannot reconcile for a moment the idea, that the tender chryſalis of winged inſects, preſerved by extreme heat, can be equally foſtered in both ſituations.

It is agreed, that the eggs depoſited in ſummer among the rein-deer's hair, produce the gnats the following ſummer: now, the ſame proceſs being allowed with that of the eggs depoſited in the lakes, what muſt become of the tender chryſalis when the waters are frozen? How different the lodging beneath the rein-deer's ſkin, and beneath or upon the frozen field of ice and ſnow!

I have noticed in Ingria, that where the lands are cultivated, and cleared of trees and bruſh-wood, the gnats are not ſo numerous as in the neighbourhood of foreſts; nay, the

winged

winged clouds, which at times obſcure the heavens, viſibly aſcend every day from the foreſts; a certain proof that they are the nurſeries in winter of theſe tormentors, who in ſummer, too, receive ſhelter in them from the heat, as in the other ſeaſon from the cold. The comparative number of eggs lodged in the backs of animals muſt be ſmall to that in the crevices of the beech and fir-trees.

The Laplander and his rein-deer are ſo nearly connected together, that it would be a difficult attempt to treat of them ſeparately. In ſummer the Lapland herdſmen erect near the beſt paſtures, tents, and cover them with the ſkin of this uſeful creature, who had bled under his knife during a ſcarcity of proviſion in winter, and now ſhades his maſter from the ſultry heat, while he tends the ſurvivors of the herd. The fiſherman likewiſe dwells *under the ſhade of the rein-deer*, while he proſecutes his occupation upon the lakes and rivers: nor does this animal merely ſerve as an article of uſe, but of ornament; the Lapland females draw

out

out his ſinews into thread, which they have the art of gilding, and with this thread they embroider their clothes. It muſt be a very barren country indeed where a woman cannot find ſomething with which to ornament her perſon. The rein-deer is to the Lapland females, what the ſilk-worm is to the Perſian ladies. Nature ſupplies in every clime productions which, though apparently oppoſite in quality, anſwer nearly the ſame ends when aided by ingenuity and induſtry.

The animals common to Lapland, beſides the rein-deer, are the bear, the wolf, the elk, the ermine: of theſe the Laplanders kill as many by hunting and otherwiſe as they can, for the ſake of their fleſh as well as of their ſkins. Winter is the ſeaſon for hunting, and when the bear has retired to his cave, and the wolf and elk, pinched by hunger, aſſemble near the habitations of men. In ſummer the wild animals are more ſhy, and the human natives have neither horſes nor hounds to purſue them. The bow and arrow, and ſnares, are the only inſtruments made

made uſe of here in deſtroying the brute creation. To ſecure the bear is the moſt dangerous ſport, notwithſtanding he is feeble during the winter, and in ſpring owing to that torpid ſtate in which he has paſſed the winter, and that, if we are to credit the naturaliſt, the only ſuſtenance he has is in ſucking his paws, raiſing thereby a froth upon them, which he licks. The wolf, of a very different complexion, prowls through the ſnowy wilderneſs: every creature is his prey; while the bear ſlumbers, he is the lion of the foreſt; the ſole diſturber of the night, while, as the Lapland poet writes,

"From th' icy valley howling to the morn."

Love and war have, from the beginning of the world, been the firſt ſubjects of poetry. The Laplanders have no ſtate of warfare but with the bear, and with him they record their exploits. It is this animal alone who diſputes with the Laplander the prize of courage. When the bear is conquered, a feaſt is prepared, and the following ſong is chanted in full chorus:

Of

Of all the foreſt beaſts, on hill or plain,
Thee we revere, though now ſubdu'd and ſlain.
Thanks to the gods who ſent ſuch noble prey;
Our huts are fill'd with health, our hearts with joy.
Soon as the ſun, the glorious lamp of day,
Hides him behind the hills, and ſheds his ev'ning ray,
I'll hie me home; and mirth, all clad in flowers,
Shall reign within my tent!—Sweet joy the hours
Shall fill, for three long nights, within our doors.
With tranſport we will climb the mountain's brow;
Renew the chaſe thoſe pleaſures to renew.
Joy ſpreads around, joy brought this morning's light!
And ſhall attend the cloſing of the night.
With carols ſoft we ſhall enchant the bear;
Our ſongs will prove how much we him revere;
O glorious game, we ſtill expect thee here.

A Laplander, who has killed a bear, is forbid to lie with his wife for ſeveral ſucceeding nights, probably upon the idea that his ſtrength has been exhauſted in ſuch hazardous and laborious work.

It might be imagined that, in a country abounding with wild animals, the herds would often fall a prey to them. But theſe are defended by herdſmen; and the wolf, even pinched by ſevere hunger, is afraid of the human figure and voice; and when it is known that, in the inhabited parts of Africa,

Africa, even children armed with ſticks chaſe away the lion, it will ſeem no way wonderful that wolves are kept at bay.

In ſummer the Laplanders are well ſupplied with food: earth, ſea, and ſky, offer them plenty; for, at this ſeaſon, large flights of geeſe, ducks, and other birds, viſit the country, and ſupply an additional diſh to their more common ones from the rivers and woods. Theſe birds leave the northern regions at the approach of winter, and the other animals would probably do ſo too had they wings, and were they not at the ſame time covered with warm furs. From this ſpontaneous larder the natives might lay up, for the cold ſeaſon, when the ſeas and rivers, when earth and air, are ſhut againſt them, a ſufficient quantity of proviſions. The Laplanders have not the art of curing meat, and before they have conſumed one half the other is rotten. Experience has proved that ſalted food is unwholſome, nay fatal, in extreme cold climates; yet it is remarkable, that the inhabitants of northern countries are the fondeſt

of

of ſalt diſhes. The reverſe is the caſe in hot countries, where ſalt is a natural production. Whether ſalted meat is the moſt wholeſome diſh for the natives of the lands which produce ſalt, or whether a moderate ſeaſoning is beſt for all, I will not determine; nature, ever attentive to the preſervation of her creatures, affords the northern nations an eaſy and ready method to cure their winter proviſions, by expoſing them to the froſt. It would be well if the Laplanders would obſerve this method with the fiſh and fowl and other animals that are caught at the beginning and during winter, inſtead of keeping them within their huts, where, though there is not heat enough to warm themſelves, there is enough to ſpoil their proviſions; and the ſcents ariſing from the putrified ſtores could be ſuffered only by a Laplander, whoſe ſenſes of feeling, taſte, and ſmell ſeem exceedingly well adapted to the evils reſulting, either from the climate, or from his lazy and dirty habits. He is more ingenious in catching than in curing food.

A Lap-

A Lapland fiſher makes a hole in the ice of the lakes and rivers: through this he drops lines and nets. Their induſtry and œconomy are as ſurpriſing in ſome things, as they are neglected in others. They make an excellent glue of fiſh ſkins. They dry them: then they put them in cold water to ſoak, and to render it more eaſy to take off the ſcales. Several of the ſkins, thus prepared, are put into the rein-deer's bladder, in order that in the operation of boiling nothing but the ſteam may mix with them. Half an hour is allowed in boiling, particular care being taken to keep the ſkins under water. This ended, the bags are taken out, and the ſkins thus reduced to a glue of the very beſt quality.

In the chaſe the Laplander diſcovers ſtill greater ingenuity than in fiſhing. He purſues the game upon wooden ſkaits. Theſe are made of fir, about two feet in length, and half a foot in breadth, turning up at the ends. When the ſnow is frozen hard at the ſurface, the Laplander, by means of theſe ſkaits, appears to fly along, and with amazing

amazing rapidity: but unlefs the fnow is frozen hard, the fnow-fhoes ferve rather to prevent him from finking into it, than to expedite his journey; and while the frozen furface favours the purfuer, it prevents the animal purfued from efcaping; as it is difficult to run upon a flippery road. Some writers record that the Laplander proceeds upon his fkaits with the utmoft rapidity down the mountain's fide, or up the moft craggy precipice, pufhing himfelf along with a pole held in his hand. The abfurdity of fuch expeditions is obvious. He muft be a very wretched fkaiter who accelerates his motion with a pole, and a very excellent one who can fkait up a precipice. The pole ferves the Laplander to prevent him at times from falling, and to ftop fhort his expedition, as well as to ftrike the game when he has overtaken it.

As the women of Holland and other northern nations partake, and are equally fkilful at thefe exercifes as the men, fo the Lapland females are expert at fkaiting; but they do not frequently join in hunting or fhoot-

ing with the arrow. The men not only monopolize the right of killing animals, but of cooking them. Like the Grecian heroes, they are famous for dreſſing pork-ſteaks. It is the poſt of honour in the houſe, to broil the hams of a bear or an elk upon the coals. Their meſſes are very delicious: they pound dried fiſh in a kind of mortar, with nearly an equal portion of the tender bark of the birch tree; this is baked into bread: but in wealthy families who indulge in luxurious living, a little oatmeal, or even flour, is added. Beef ſteaks they can eat very well without bread: this ſcarce article is ſeldom uſed but with milk or with broth. Their broth is thus prepared: the blood of the rein-deer is carefully preſerved in his own bladder; when they wiſh to have broth, they add to a certain meaſure of blood, water and flour, which are boiled together.

The inhabitants of the north, particularly of Siberia, have a curious but ſimple method of making a ſort of brandy. They put the grain of any kind they are poſſeſſed of under ground and in ſacks, during the heat of

ſummer.

ſummer. A fermentation ſoon takes place, and it becomes malt, which is then ſeparated from the chaff by beating it in a wooden or ſtone mortar with a peſtle. The malt, thus prepared, is baked into cakes by means of a little hot water, and afterwards dried. The ſpirit is made, when wanted, by ſteeping one or more cakes in boiling water, which is quickly impregnated, or converted into a ſtrong liquor. The milk of the rein-deer is kept in different ſorts of veſſels for winter uſe: this milk is thickened with ſorrel or berries. The frozen blood of that animal is the portable ſoup of the Laplanders: when either the frozen milk or blood is uſed, the quantity wanted is cut off with a knife. Excellent cheeſe is made during ſummer of the rein-deer's milk. What is eaten at this ſeaſon is new cheeſe: they boil what is intended for freezing, as the cheeſe is ſo fat that it would hardly freeze without this operation.

Nor are the Laplanders leſs ſkilled in the art of dreſſing vegetables.—I ſee you ſmile while I am praiſing the Lapland arts. This

ſmile originates in a wrong idea of what good living conſiſts in: the Lapland diſhes ſupply food to the ſprings of life; the table of a modern epicure poiſon to every vein. Here are no vegetables, but ſuch as grow ſpontaneouſly in the field. The root angelica is a favourite ſallad—they eat it generally with whale oil; a very important article in the Lapponian cookery. Their children learn early to ſuck this *liquid*; and if one may judge of what is beſt for health, by its effects upon the young Laplanders and Samoieids, the variety of glaſſes in our apothecaries' ſhops may be difuſed, their contents thrown out, and a few jars of whale and ſea-dog eſſence put in their ſtead. The Laplanders boil and roaſt many vegetable roots, as well as eat them raw with ſalt or oil. The tender bark of the birch tree is their celery, and they eat it greedily after having dipped it in the whale ſauce. In ſhort, whale oil is a ſauce they uſe to all kinds of viands, and eatables of every denomination.

The Ruſſians are not behind hand in the

love

love of oil, though the oil is of more delicate quality. A Ruſſian dips his bread, his fiſh, his vegetables, his pork-chops, and even caviar (the fatteſt and moſt luſcious diſh in the world) in oil. I believe this quantity of blubber, which the common Ruſſians are perpetually ſipping, ſerves to correct and to prevent the bad effects of the equal quantity of ſpirituous liquors poured upon their vitals. The oil ſerves as a coat of mail to the ſtomach of a Ruſſian, as it naturally repels other liquids. The Laplanders are not more hurt by uſing ſpirituous liquors, than by water procured by melting ſnow. Their copious draughts of oil no doubt alleviate the diſeaſes produced by drinking ſnow water, or it is frequently a preventative of them.

The attempts to promote agriculture in Lapland have been not only fruitleſs, but very prejudicial to the natives. The extreme cold of this climate is unfavourable to the growth of trees. The natives, depending much upon timber for fuel, ſaw their woods burned by colonial farmers. The

produce of the cleared grounds will never pay the damage, and the governments of Ruſſia, Sweden, and Denmark ſhould no longer perſiſt in imaginary, while they might forward practicable, improvements. Let coloniſts be eſtabliſhed in Lapland, Samoieida, and other northern provinces, for the purpoſe of teaching the inhabitants how to render their preſent ſituation more comfortable. For inſtance, let the coloniſts build commodious huts and villages of timber, as in Finland, with ſtoves and chimneys: let them be dreſſed after the manner of the Laplanders, which is beſt adapted for the climate, but let this dreſs be clean; let a ſhirt of linen be added, and ablutions in water frequently performed, as well as ſtrict obſervance of cleanlineſs in every particular. The Laplanders would ſoon follow their example. Man is an imitative animal, and will purſue either virtue or vice, induſtry or profligacy, as it is held out to him by the example of others.

Theſe are the ſimple improvements and leſſons recommended for the natives of the

pole: their present situation renders them incapable, and it is to be feared that local circumstances always will render them incapable, of any other improvements.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.